Eliza W. Osborne

Case 31.

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2014

https://archive.org/details/whitelady01wolt

The White Lady.

THE

White Lady:

A ROMANCE.

FROM THE GERMAN OF C. VON WOLTMANN;

TRANSLATED BY

JAMES D. HAAS.

LONDON:

JAMES BURNS, 17, PORTMAN STREET.

M,DCCCXLV.

RBR
Jan 12
#788
no. 1

CONTENTS.

Page

CHAP. I.

The Ancestral Painting 1

CHAP. II.

The Late Rising 4

CHAP. III.

The Ancient Record 6

CHAP. IV.

The Morning Ride 7

CHAP. V.

The Widow 10

Page

CHAP. VI.

The Steward.. 13

CHAP. VII.

New Life, new Feelings 18

CHAP. VIII.

The Birth of the Son 20

CHAP. IX.

The Mother's Thanksgiving 22

CHAP. X.

The Gift from the Dead 24

CHAP. XI.

The Old Man's Legacy 26

CHAP. XII.

The Golden Key 29

CHAP. XIII.

The Resolution 30

CHAP. XIV.

The Manuscript of Centuries 32

CHAP. XV.

The Manuscript of Centuries continued 45

CHAP. XVI.

The Manuscript of Centuries concluded.—Bertha .. 57

Page

CHAP. XVII.

The Ruined Tower 59

CHAP. XVIII.

Completion 62

The White Lady.

Chap. I.

The Ancestral Painting.

THE sons and daughters of an illustrious family in Bohemia were assembled at the Castle of R——, an ancient possession of their house, which then belonged to the eldest of the daughters.

They were collectively youthful and cheerful, happily married, and blessed not only with the enjoyment of rank and wealth at the present moment, but looking forward to the hope of like prosperity in future years.

On a fine May morning, Bertha, the newly-wedded bride of Otho, the future chief of the family, was going with the sisters of her bridegroom and her other female companions through a saloon, which was in her way from the wing of the castle in which she dwelt to those apartments in which the family were

accustomed to assemble for their morning repast. The rays of the sun fell brightly on the paintings which adorned its white walls, and brought out more plainly the figures on an ancient, blackened picture, which had often attracted her attention, from its problematical composition. While she paused before it, her companions, with passing curiosity, inspected the other paintings, for the most part family pictures, and which shone as if warmed into new life by the morning sun.

"See, Bertha, what a likeness there is in the countenance of this old lady to that of thine Otho!" exclaimed one of her cousins, as she pointed to the opposite wall.

"Yes, but not in look and manner," observed another, who had casually joined them.

Bertha, at the name of her husband, had turned from the picture which she was attentively examining, and, directing her looks towards the likeness in question, was also struck with the similarity which the face of the Matron, before which she stood, presented to her Otho, and not only to him, but to another figure which was delineated on that ancient, blackened painting as the chief personage in various scenes. Attired in an antiquated dress of black velvet, trimmed with fur, a white veil, twined in numerous folds around her head, sat a lady of about fifty years of age on a kind of bench or seat, the high and pictured back of which stretched across the whole breadth of the painting, forming the back-ground of the figure. As she sat absorbed in contemplative and calm repose, her features wore an expression as if she never desired to rise or move again. Peace and love alone appeared to animate her features and her whole being: she looked as if to her the past and present were combined in the immediate moment, and as if she had neither thought nor feeling for aught beyond it.

It was with feelings of pleasure, mixed with sad surprise, that Bertha contemplated features resembling so much those of her Otho, conveying as they did at the same time an expression so much the opposite of his usual character. The many moments of anxiety and fear which she had undergone when witnessing that—whilst depicting a degree of ardent affection and benevolence—his entire countenance would too often betray his natural impetuosity and temerity, were here re-awakened in her mind. Her heart was

agitated to its very depth, when she indulged in the anticipation of the happiness she must experience were but the wished-for repose, as here represented, permitted to temper and go hand-in-hand with his otherwise manly magnanimity and boldness of heart. Yielding to a chain of thought, which even to herself became less and less explicable, she returned to the old painting, in order to examine it more closely.

It represented the interior of a church resembling that belonging to the castle itself. In the fore-ground, on the right, Bertha plainly recognized the Matron; but here she was depicted as youthful, attired in a dress of purple hue, a wreath of precious stones around her brow, and a knight, arrayed in splendid garb, clasping her hand, while between her fingers she held a ring. On the left she appeared again, in less rich attire, with an infant on her arm, looking less youthful, and more like the matronly portraiture in the large painting. Resembling almost exactly the latter, she was depicted here, in the centre of the painting, as kneeling amid many other figures in the same prostrate position; and, again, more deeply in the back-ground, she was represented as lying on a bed, apparently dead. The surrounding figures, however, originally depicted in this scene were now nearly obliterated, as were equally so a series of representations delineated on a more reduced scale. Farther behind appeared a scene with large figures, altogether at variance with the rules of perspective, and in which a youthful female form, with light, loosely-flowing hair, was flying before the same Matron. In the remote distance was depicted the exterior of the same church, with a funeral procession by torch-light, while a figure in white was standing on the threshold of the widely-opened gate of the church; but this figure, as well as those of the procession, were so faded by time, that at this moment, even in so bright a sunshine, it was impossible to do more than guess at them. Thus it was quite evident to the observer that the various spaces and scenes of the painting were filled up and represented without any connecting link or distinct design. On the other hand, Bertha was able to discern, by the light of the sun's rays, the date of the year 1520 still faintly visible in a corner of the foreground. The entire painting exhibited a comprehensive history of the life of an individual, but of whom no trace was to be dis-

covered throughout the composition. The supposition that it might be the life of that Matron whose features had descended to her Otho, increased her interest in this enigma.

Her companions had already quitted the saloon, and missed her in their progress through the adjacent rooms. One of these, a young and merry creature, ran back, peeped in at the door, and exclaimed—

"Just as I thought! Where there is aught comes across her path resembling in the least her Otho, there is no getting her away from it."

Saying which, the happy chatterer ran up to Bertha, and drew her from the all-absorbing picture to join the company.

Chap. II.

The Late Rising.

The company had long since assembled, and were engaged in varied conversation; yet Otho still did not appear.

"When I retired to rest last evening," said Bertha, in reply to his sisters' inquiries, "I left him standing at the window of the corridor which looks into the court, where he wished to enjoy a short time longer the beautiful moonlight of the summer's night. This morning, when I awoke, he was still asleep."

Just at this moment Otho himself entered the hall, and was immediately rallied on his late appearance.

"None other is to blame," he retorted, "but the lady of the castle here, who assuredly does not keep her female guests in the best possible discipline, when she allows them to be out at very unseasonable hours."

"How so?" exclaimed the princess.

"Even thus: The night-breeze was breathing so gently, the moon shone so brightly into the old corridor, that I was induced last evening to remain at the window and look down in the court, which, as far as the foot of the ruined tower, lay wrapped in moonlight and in deep silence before me. I had not been long at the

window ere I perceived that I was not alone. Opposite to me, seated on a stone on the wall of the battlement, was a lady, dressed in white. I could not distinguish her features, for they were concealed at once by the shadow of the wall and the folds of her veil; but I could nevertheless discern that she fixed her eyes on me with so stedfast and immovable a gaze, that I resolved at length to test her boldness by keeping my eyes fixed steadily upon hers in return as long as she continued thus to make me the object of her contemplations. She was, however, not to be overcome; and, after gazing until my eyes ached with weariness, I was fain to yield the contest to my fair rival, and, shutting the window in disappointment, I retired to bed."

The princess was seen now to turn pale.

"O, say no more!" she exclaimed. "The court of the castle is kept constantly locked; none can find an entrance there, either from within or without; therefore it cannot possibly have been any one of the castle's inmates. Still I like not to hear of the appearance, for, as often as the apparition of the White Lady has presented itself, it has ever foreboded evil to our house."

"Nay, you are making out the lady to be a ghost, and thus think to silence me; but in that, believe me, you are mistaken. She who stared me out of countenance is neither spectre nor witch, and least of all is she our well-known——"

"Why, what do you refer to?" interrupted one of the brothers-in-law. "Is there such a legend in the family? *I* never heard it mentioned before."

"Nay, nor is it fitting subject for the spinning-room," replied Otho.

"Such a legend, however," said the prince, "is nevertheless assuredly in circulation; and even very recently we have made a discovery which has a relation to it."

"Hah!" "How so?" "When?" "Where?" inquired a chorus of voices.

"If you compare the outer with the inner portion of the church attached to the castle, it will be seen that the two by no means correspond, and that, in the vicinity of the towers, there may exist some place to which there is no longer any door. When, in the present spring, the second principal tower was being repair-

ed, and the pinnacle removed, there were found in it various gold and silver coins of the reign of Wladislaus, together with a parchment record, which confirms the aforesaid supposition, and affords information connected with the spot referred to, which, from that, appears to have some relation to the tradition in question."

Yielding to the earnest entreaties of the greater part of the company, the prince now summoned one of his principal attendants, and despatched him for the ancient document, which he directed him to seek in a particular compartment of his writing table.

All thronged impatiently around the prince as he received it from the servant and spread it out on the table. The letters were in many places no longer legible, being much blackened and impaired by moisture. The contents, written in the Latin and Bohemian language, as far as could be deciphered, were as follows :

Chap. III.

The Ancient Record.

"In the Year of our Lord 1520, in the time of Wladislaus of Poland, King of Böhaimb, and on the festival day of the apostles St. Phillip and St. James, Gescheck, Lord of N——, commanded the chapel under this tower, in which the bones of twelve of his ancestors and other kinsmen of his house lie interred, to be walled up, and the tower to be erected and completed over them, sacred to their memory and honour. Those who repose there are——"

Here followed the names of those interred in the chapel, part of which only was legible. The last name, and which could be read more distinctly, was that of "Przibislawa von R——, bride of Odolenus of Chisch, who died in the year 1157." The record now continued :

"This was done in consequence of a great cause of alarm which spread among the people ; for when, in the year 1157, the Lord of Markwart of N——, with Duke Wladislaus of Böhaimb, had repaired to Würzburg to attend the espousal of the emperor, Frederick Barbarossa of Swabia, with Beatrice, daughter of the Duke

of Burgundy, he there fell asleep in the Lord on the day of St. John the Baptist; while his consort, the Lady Juditha, died here at her castle on the same day.

"Now, when the corpse of the deceased lord was brought here for interment, and was about to be deposited in the vault of this chapel, whilst the chapel doors stood wide open, there was seen under them the Lady Juditha in her shroud, advancing to meet the funeral procession, as if to welcome and receive her lord * *

"The leaders of the procession were * * * * * * * * with great terror * * * ."

These blanks were followed by a considerable space, the contents of which was totally illegible. It was only towards the conclusion that the following passage became more easy to be deciphered:

" * * the sexton * no longer dared to venture in to toll the bell, either at night, early dawn, or even in open day; neither would any of the congregation stand near the entrance of the chapel during divine service, from great fear * * * *

" * * the Lord Gescheck commanded the history and fate of his Ancestress to be carefully represented in a large painting. The picture was placed in a costly shrine, before the walled-up entrance, on this day, * * * , 1520. Peace in God and eternal repose to all departed souls.—Amen."

Chap. IV.

The Morning Ride.

The deciphering the illegible portions of the ancient document, and the shrine in the church, now divided the attention of all present. They remembered the subject of the former, and the spot as described, and hastened to examine it; and as no key could be discovered, it was broken open; but all was found to be completely empty, to the great delight of Otho, who took much more interest in the morning ride than in any explanation connected with the history and fate of his Ancestress, or the reason why she could not rest quiet in her grave, and who had merely accompanied the

curious party to the church in order to procure their more speedy return to the castle, in the fore-court of which the steeds, already saddled, were snorting and pawing the ground with impatience.

The wonted paleness of Bertha's cheek had become still paler and more wan during the reading of the ancient document. Her head, which usually bent a little on one side, as if oppressed by the slight burthen of her light brown hair, sank lower on her heaving and agitated bosom. She had silently followed the rest into the church, and she shuddered on beholding the empty shrine, the dimensions of which she but too plainly saw accorded exactly with those of the old painting in the white hall. She knew the spot to which the vanished picture had been conveyed, and identified it as the enigmatical representation she had gazed on that morning; but her agitation was such that she was unable to mention it.

A question now rose for consideration, whether they should again break open the chapel. The princess, however, positively forbad this.

"Leave the dead in peace!" she exclaimed, "and let not idle curiosity disturb their repose."

On hearing these words Bertha breathed more freely, and cast a look of gratitude on the princess.

"Break open the chapel or let it alone; do either the one thing or the other," observed Otho, hastily; "but pray do not lose this lovely morning for your ride."

Saying which he left the church rather hurriedly, his example being followed by the rest. As he stood in the court, and was about to spring into his saddle, Bertha embraced him, and said softly, looking up tenderly in his face—

"Dear Otho, do not ride too rashly!"

He regarded her for a moment attentively, saw the tears in her dark blue eyes, and exclaimed, half angrily, half fondly—

"Why, Bertha dear, they have worried thee into tears with their silly ghost-stories! Fear nothing, my little snowdrop" (for thus he called her in sport; nor was there, perhaps, a more fitting image to which to compare her, as she stood there, with drooping head, so white, so fresh, so gentle, pure, and tender). Having said these words, he imprinted his farewell with a kiss upon her sweet lips,

and, leaping upon his bay steed, was borne rapidly from her sight.

"The noble animal has carried him so long in safety; why, then, should a misfortune befall him to-day?" thought Bertha, when she beheld him mounted on the steed upon which he had fought through many a battle, and at the thought she raised her mild blue eyes to the distant dark blue sky; yet even from thence she felt a chilling, gloomy, presentiment descend upon her.

The cavalcade had scarcely been absent an hour from the castle, and those left behind assembled again together, when the princess was summoned. She immediately quitted the apartment, and remained away some time. A second lady was now called away: she quickly returned, with a vain assumption of cheerfulness and serenity, and whispered, after a pause, a few words to a third. There was an evident anxiety and suspense, a coming and going, and a silence more fearful, if possible, than the certainty of the worst. Bertha bore it awhile with continually-growing alarm.

"What"—she cried, at length, "say—what has happened? I know, I feel convinced it concerns *me*. Otho——"

At this moment the princess returned — pale, trembling, and aghast.

"Say—speak! Otho!——" the agitated Bertha exclaimed, as the princess entered.

"Compose yourself," said the prince, who had followed close behind his consort; "he has been thrown from his horse, but he has received no injury of consequence; he will be here almost immediately."

"He has been thrown—he is dead!" cried Bertha, and sank senseless to the earth.

No presentiment can prepare us for such agony: it overwhelms and desolates life beyond all foreboding.

Chap. V.

The Widow.

The house of joy had now been suddenly changed into the house of mourning. The whole aspect of things assumed another character. No one thought of pleasure or social enjoyment. Loud lamentations or deep silence, wild regrets or subdued emotion, filled the apartments.

Otho could not be restored to life: the fall had proved fatal, and his corpse was placed beside those of his ancestors in the family vault of the chapel. For many weeks did poor Bertha struggle with death, and the utmost care and efforts of her friends were scarcely sufficient to preserve her; nor would these have proved availing, had not one hope attached her to life: she felt herself in a situation to become a mother. Her soul clung to the child, the anticipation of whose birth had blessed the latter days of her husband's life, but who, alas! was now doomed never to know a father's affection.

The summer had succeeded to the spring, when, for the first time, she wandered forth once again amid the charms of nature; but she felt that its joys and its spirit were flown. To her the mountains, the woods, the meadows, and the streams—like herself—were isolated and alone: and yet, except in this place, she felt that there was no spot on earth where she could dwell, and to which her heart was now so enchained by the most fond, yet painful recollections.

Here, where she had enjoyed the last happiness with her Otho—here, where he lay interred, and where his child was shortly to come into existence—here, she found a home of pain and content, which, at times, proved grateful to her feelings. It was only when her recollection occasionally returned to the mysterious legend of the house, and the White Lady connected with it, that these sensations became somewhat disturbed.

On the other hand, the prince and his consort wished to quit

this residence, and were desirous to take Bertha with them; but, when it came to be definitively arranged upon this point, they were unable to resist her entreaties to be allowed to remain in the castle. They accordingly yielded to her wishes, persuaded that to tear her away from hence would be as fatal to her as the transplanting some tender blossom from the soil in which it has been nurtured.

Bertha retained her own numerous suite of attendants, together with several of Otho's, and his stud; and yet the spacious castle seemed silent as death, now that she alone remained therein as mistress. She had removed already from the old corridor, the white chamber, and indeed altogether from that entire wing, and now inhabited apartments situated some distance therefrom; yet she often shuddered if a door but opened gently, or when she looked around her chamber by the light of her night-lamp, half expecting, yet dreading, the appearance of the vision. She shrunk with awe when she asked herself, at times, whether the apparition betokened evil to her family, or what relation really existed between it and the White Lady. The death of her Otho seemed to be connected with two particular circumstances; namely, that, in the first place, she had seen represented in the old painting a youthful female figure flying before the matron; and, in the second place, there was the fact, that in the year 1157 Przibislawa, the bride of Odelenus of Chisch, closed the series of the names belonging to those who were interred in the walled-up chapel. Accordingly, shortly after the death of the former, this said Juditha must have become the wife of Markwart von R——, upon the subject of which fact, the old picture, as well as the ancient record, admitted not the least doubt; whence, she was the individual represented in the youthful figure on its flight. When, however, Bertha then recollected the expression on the countenance of the Matron in the second and more recently completed picture, which likewise appeared to represent the aforesaid Juditha, and thought of the resemblance her features bore to those of her Otho, this similarity afforded a sufficient proof of the absence of all that was malevolent or even unkind—a feeling which gained on her so far, that she actually longed to see her; and while engaged at her work, she could not withhold from often raising her eyes towards the door, expecting to behold the phantom appear—until, suddenly awe-

struck with the idea that her wish might in reality be brought into fulfilment, she would ring for one of her women to bear her company. They, by degrees, partook of her alarm, and felt more and more overcome with terror; inasmuch as frequently, on being hastily and loudly summoned by their mistress, they found her in a state of the greatest agitation, and wanting nothing but that some one should remain with her, so that she might not be left alone. But the Matron appeared not, either to Lady Bertha or to any one else in the castle. In the chapel, in the garden, in the courts, and throughout the apartments, were seen nought else but living and earthly subjects; and the fears of all, in the total absence of every dreaded visit, became gradually allayed.

The autumn was now far advanced. On a still October morning, Bertha stood one day at the window, and surveyed the prospect around. Mists were gathering round the mountains; their summits, and the ancient ruins that o'ertopped them, were now reflected in the brilliant rays of the sun, and light wreaths of vapour were flitting here and there across the scene. Flights of dark rooks, with loud and endless cawing, were floating in the pure air, around the ruins, over the fields impearled with dew, the grass-grown and neglected court, and the lofty battlements and towers of the castle. The steeds of her late lord Otho were pawing the earth in the stables; his bright bay charger was heard to neigh wildly and impatiently; and, soon afterwards, the now masterless huntsman led him forth, and, leaping on his back, galloped through the court, preceded by the barking dogs. But, alas! there was no full cry of hounds, no jovial companions of the chace, as in the previous year, when her Otho rode forth so gaily on that noble steed, and called those hounds around him, when she fondly looked after him as a bride, and hoped for a long and happy life, rendered blest by his faithful and endearing love.

Weeping tears of bitter grief, she threw herself, overcome with her emotions, on a seat which stood under the window. It was now she felt a strange and irrepressible desire to behold her Otho before her, were it only once again in his living form. All the ideas which her fancy presented of him were but the more vague and shadowy in proportion as she endeavoured to realize them, and render them the more distinct. She longed for some painting,

or some bust, which might assist in and confirm the creations of her mind; but such was not forthcoming: for Otho never yielded to the wish expressed that he would sit for his portrait, or allow any other delineation of himself to be taken. The increasing earnestness of her desire, the real and overpowering state of agony produced within her, combined with the lovely sunbright morning hour, when earth and air were full of life and harmony, impelled her once more to seek the image of the Matron, and therein trace the features of her Otho.

She sent her orders to the aged steward of the castle to unlock the doors of the white chamber, took with her one of her women as her companion, and repaired thither.

Chap. VI.

The Steward.

The way to the white chamber, from that part of the castle which she inhabited, did not lead through the apartments, but by the grand-staircase. The lofty, darkly-painted folding-doors of ancient date, richly adorned with carved work and golden ornaments, were thrown widely open at the Lady Bertha's approach. The sun shone through the high windows, gilding in its course the brown and yellow foliage of the trees without. The aged steward stood bareheaded to receive her. As she entered, her eye quickly perceived in the distance the object she sought; and deeply moved, and almost shuddering, she but too clearly recognized in their reality the features of her beloved husband, as they appeared to contemplate her own. She approached close to the picture, to conceal a flood of tears; the old man and her female attendant stood still and silent at a respectful distance.

At length, after a long pause, and when he observed that the lady no longer wept so violently, the steward approached her, and said, as she turned her tear-fraught eyes upon him:

"Alas! noble lady, too truly must you weep when you look upon *that* picture. Methinks, had our young and gracious lord

worn so calm and composed a mien"—and he pointed to the portrait—"and not one of so bold and warlike a character, as was his wont—and which nevertheless became him—we might at this moment have reason to rejoice and return our thanks to heaven, and not be forced to weep as you, alas! and so many more are doing for his loss!"

"For me, my good Francis, there is now no other joy on earth," she mournfully replied; "and, be assured, when you weep with me for your departed lord, you shed your tears for one who truly merits your mourning."

"But, noble lady," the old man returned, "there will still be cause for joy once more, and which will delight us all around. I ventured not, as yet, to inquire of my noble mistress whether she would perchance wish to see the apartments in the side wing adjacent to her own, and which we considered might be fitted up for the coming heir or heiress. It would only be necessary to make a door in your ladyship's sleeping apartment, and you would then step at once from that into the chamber inhabited by the infant lord or lady; the next two rooms would serve for the attendants of the child; the fourth, which is connected with the grand staircase in the wing, might be used as an ante-chamber; and a long suite of others, which follow, we could shut up altogether. I will take care that the fixing of the door shall not disturb your ladyship for a single night."

"The arrangements you mention, good Francis," she replied, "are highly proper and considerate; and I willingly sanction them. But, tell me, do you know whom that portrait is intended to represent in this painting?"

"No, noble lady; I do not know. The picture has been in the castle from time immemorial."

Bertha's eye now fell again involuntarily on the mysterious portrait; but she anxiously turned it aside, as if from a secret over which fate had benevolently thrown a veil; and she purposely placed herself in such a position, that neither her own looks nor those of the old steward should fall on it, who might otherwise be induced to give her that explanation which she was anxious now to avoid. The venerable man had nevertheless observed the direction her eye had taken, and said:

"That picture, so please you, noble lady, was brought from the chapel during the lifetime of his highness the deceased prince, the grandfather of our gracious lady."

"'Tis well! We will now proceed to view the apartments, good Francis," interrupted the lady, and rather hurriedly quitted the room, fearful he might resume his discourse. He, however, appeared to have little or nothing more to say, and followed her instantly.

The apartments were exactly as the old man had described them. They consisted of a long series of whitened, desolate rooms, forming an entire side-wing, with faded paintings on the walls, and scanty and decaying furniture scattered about. The prospect was, however, cheerful, the windows commanding a view of the whole surrounding country. Along the entire length of the wall, in the rear of the chambers, opposite the windows, ran a corridor, the windows of which looked into the court, and which was likewise overlooked by Lady Bertha's apartments. Of the latter, the last of the series opened on the battlements of a half-ruined tower; a rampart thence extended sidewards to the back part of the castle, which once, when it served as the defence of the fortress, was furnished at regular intervals with turrets of similar kind: this dilapidated tower, and its neighbour, the ruined structure in the desolate court below, were all that now remained. The entire scene produced at first an unpleasant and gloomy impression; still, as the spot was not without its attractions, and as the old steward, maintaining that this was the most convenient wing of the whole castle, so earnestly entreated his noble lady would allow him to make such further alterations as might be found necessary, Bertha conquered her repugnance; besides which, the renewed favourable impression made by the recent view of the Matron's picture triumphed over every dread.

Already, on the following day, on the third, and on the fourth, she summoned the old steward again to the white chamber, and clung with more and more ardent feeling to the picture.

"Who knows," thought she, "if this really is the portrait of the White Lady? or, if one of our ancestors may not perhaps have felt a desire to have a sister, a wife, or a mother, portrayed in this guise? The painting is evidently of more recent date."

She cherished this idea with much fondness; for in proportion as this painting attracted her whole feelings, so, on the other hand, was she completely repelled by the other more ancient and mysterious production, which indeed filled her with so much aversion and dread, that she found herself several times forced in consequence to quit the room.

"Say, good Francis," she inquired of the old man, at length, "could not this picture, which so much resembles my lamented husband, be removed from this chamber, and hung up in my own room?"

The venerable steward gazed on her curiously and anxiously, looked cautiously around, and observing no one near them, he said:

"If such be your pleasure, noble lady, it shall assuredly be done; but ever since this castle has existed, no such change has ever taken place. The deceased line of ancestors, as portrayed upon the canvas, have ever dwelt together here within the walls of this white chamber, whilst their living descendants have continued in all times to keep themselves distinct, and hold their residence together there below."

Bertha shuddered at these words and the solemn emphasis with which he pronounced them, so different from his usual calm and kindly tone. She hesitated next morning a considerable time unresolved whether she should summon his attendance again to the white chamber; but even whilst she was yet considering, he came himself to solicit a private audience.

"Illustrious lady," he said, "it becomes not an old servant to speak of the secrets of the family in which he serves. To you, however, I may venture to do so, seeing that you are yourself my mistress, and may possibly know somewhat of those matters, although, as I perceive, not to the extent I do myself. All my forefathers have successively filled the office of steward in this castle, even down to my father. I was born on this spot, and received, and still hold, the hereditary appointment. I know all the public and private history of these walls: such possession, however, brings with it no terror to me; I am nearly at the end of my journey, and within a few steps of the grave. But of you, noble lady, I would only entreat not to indulge so much in the in-

terest you take in that picture; for such is not suited to your youth."

"Good Francis," answered his lady, "I know well to what you allude. But dost thou believe that from these his features—features the contemplation of which all my life has conveyed to my heart and whole being all that was dearest and most happy—to me aught of evil could ever flow?"

"Evil!—no, my lady; I will not say that. Yet, between the living and the dead there is a gulf; such it has been ordained by heaven's decree to nature: thence come many tears, but also much peace. For *that* lady, yonder, there is no peace; that I well know: it is for that reason that I have arranged for your ladyship's accommodation *here*, where she has never been seen since the memory of man. Live here, therefore, my lady, in peace and comfort; leave the dead to the enjoyment of their repose, and attract them not, even in thought, to yourself. I know nothing of *her* life;" and he pointed to the portrait of the Matron; "the painting which records it has been obscured by time: but such a penalty is awarded only to great guilt."

"Francis! My Otho—knowest thou also what occurred to him on the evening before his death?" cried Bertha, shuddering.

"I do, my lady; I know many other things as well. But all this we must leave in the hands of God," said the venerable man. "Do this, illustrious lady: be quieted, and trust to me. These ancient walls, all the associations connected with them, and I—all have grown old together. That lady often shews herself to me; her face I have never perfectly seen; but it is of a deadly pale hue, as far as I could discern beneath her veil. Her hands are bleached and bloodless, like those of a corpse. She nods to me when she sees me; and I salute her respectfully in return as the ancestress of my lord's family. I then remain standing for a time, with eyes fixed on the ground: I look not after her, and know not whence she comes, or whither she goes.—Would your ladyship now please to inspect the apartments of the future ruler of the house?"

The old man had assumed such a tone of solemnity and gravity while dwelling upon these mysterious things, that Bertha scarcely recognized him, and felt herself so carried away by his manner,

that she placed implicit faith in what he said. As soon as he addressed to his lady the last few words, he laid aside his unusual character, and, looking cheerfully and without further restraint towards her, he opened the folding-doors leading to the chambers, and disclosed to view a scene which was well calculated to dispel the gloom which had seized upon her.

Chap. VII.

New Life, new Feelings.

The chamber of the infant was furnished with new tapestry of light green hue. Silk curtains of a darker tint surrounded the bed destined for the appointed nurse, and close to it, on a wooden frame beautifully carved, stood the cradle of the expected stranger, covered with silk interwoven with artificial ivy, laurel, and myrtle, and intermingled with roses, passion-flowers, heartsease, and pansies; having a coverlet embroidered with a garland of spring flowers, all presenting a store of the most rich and blooming colours.

From the open windows was presented a wide and sunny landscape; and on the opposite side, within the room, arranged in elegantly formed recesses, lay whatever a child might require for its attire, nourishment, and nursing, altogether calculated to cheer the future mother's hopes, to soothe her grief, and to surprise her in the most delightful manner.

Nor were these effects wanting on the mind of the Lady Bertha; yet, at the same moment, her bosom was pierced as with a sword by the thought that this child, for whom a reception into life was so kindly prepared, would be deprived of the first and most common possession in life—a father's love; and she wept bitterly over the loss by which even all her joys assumed the aspect of sorrow. But at the sight of all the welcome objects above mentioned, the existence of her child and its future fate presented themselves still more immediately to her mind and heart; the feelings of the mother became more decidedly developed; and, after the foregoing conversation, she felt herself reassured in those large, yet secure, un-

haunted rooms, and in the same serene and cheerful frame of mind as if she had just landed from a raging tempest on some beautiful, peaceful island. She expressed her desire that the apartments might remain constantly thrown open, seated herself at one of the windows, and inhaled the autumnal breeze.

The thought of the Matron, the doubt connected with her whole being, had so much engrossed her mind, and had so interwoven themselves with the idea of Otho, that both time and effort were necessary to shake them off. All the sensations with which her soul was agitated, whether connected with her wishes and hopes respecting the fate of her child, with her pain for Otho's untimely death, or her grief in her state of early widowhood—all combined to lead her thoughts likewise to the Ancestress. The word *guilt,* and the suspicion of its existence in connection with *her,* as well as its very conception, which scarcely had occurred to her before, had alarmed her, and given her much pain. Soon, however, an instinctive longing after concord served to bring into peaceful unison all the emotions by which her heart was agitated; and seeking support, and placing reliance in the will of Providence, she felt she had never before experienced such consoling joy and delight.

She was thus absorbed in these meditations, when the venerable steward entered, laden with a basket full of books, and proceeded to arrange them on a shelf in a case close by. Besides the Bible, they consisted wholly of devotional books, the Lives of the Saints, the Lives of various Hermits, the Confessions and Epistles of St. Augustine, together with the writings of St, Chrysostom, &c.

Bertha had hitherto reflected but little, and read less. Her heart, so full of love, and her clear judgment, had grown and developed themselves in modest retirement, hand in hand with her outward form. She took the books with a sensation of awe and dread, but was astonished to find them so intelligible; and as a blind person, when the film is taken off his eyes, at once becomes conscious of the powers of sight and the visible world they disclose, so she at once discovered her faculties of mind, and recognized the world and the position she occupied therein.

This new employment, in which she often passed her hours for days together, proved the best antidote, the softest and sweetest balsam to the wounds of grief. Her sorrows were gradually as-

suaged thereby; Otho, her child, and the Matron, remaining, however, still the objects to which her thoughts ever returned. To the white chamber she repaired no more; not so much from any dread of the appearance of the Matron, as from the wish to avoid approaching, much less searching into, the mysterious secret, the further elucidation of which was embosomed in that particular room. Moreover, she felt that the constant endeavour to recall to her mind the beloved features of her Otho by means of those which, however they resembled his, were still not altogether like him, served only to confuse her idea of him whose image ever shone in the bright mirror of her mind.

Chap. VIII.

The Birth of the Son.

Thus the winter crept on: the period approached when the lady Bertha's confinement must shortly take place, when she dreamed one night that, on looking through the door of the child's room, which she always kept open, she beheld the Matron standing at its cradle, looking exactly as old Francis had described her appearance, and like the more recently painted picture, except that the cloth which in the latter was represented as wrapped round her head, was used now as a veil, and fell over her face; the lower part of which, however, was left visible, and looked pale and death-like. Her hands, likewise, resembled those of a corpse; and on the forefinger was the very ring represented in the painting. She gazed stedfastly at the little bed; then rested her eyes with equal seriousness upon Bertha, raised her hands over the cradle as if in blessing, stretched them out to Bertha in the same attitude, and had already vanished when the waking lady started up, and sought to discover whether what she had seen was merely a dream or reality itself.

The recollection of the apparition which Otho had witnessed the last night of his existence on earth, agitated Bertha much; she longed for the dawn of day, in order to communicate to the old

steward the vision she had beheld. At this moment she already felt the pains of childbirth, and just then one of her waiting-women entering the room, replied in answer to the question who had summoned her, that the steward had awakened, and sent her to her ladyship. Her increasing sufferings prevented Bertha from thinking further of it. In a few hours she held a son in her arms, and a flow of fresh feelings rushed on her soul, amid which the thoughts of her dream for a time were completely lost.

Nor was she reminded of it until some days after, when the venerable Francis, who had never stirred from the child's room, which in the day time was constantly filled with crowds of peasants and attendants who came to offer their congratulations, entreated his lady's permission to be allowed to approach and wish her joy.

"You have not only gratified the living, my honoured lady," said the old man on being admitted, "but likewise the dead. In the night when the child was born, a whisper breathed over my bed, like a light and cooling breeze wafted through an empty chamber of vast dimensions. It awoke me easily from my slight slumber of old age, when before me stood the White Lady in a guise in which I had never beheld her before. She pointed with outstretched arm towards the door. I arose quickly, and beheld her quitting the room, looking round to me and floating, as it were, onwards to your apartment, where she disappeared at the door of your attendant's room. I trembled with fear and anxiety to account for the meaning of this appearance of the Matron. But now I have lived to see that she is the messenger of good; that she loves your ladyship, and is anxious for your welfare, as we all are."

"My dream then," thought Bertha to herself, "must indeed have been more than a dream; and if then the dead really watch over me, why does not my Otho appear to me? for tremble I should not."

Chap. IX.

The Mother's Thanksgiving.

But neither did her Otho appear to her, nor did the Matron present herself again. The joy of seeing her fair child expanding with every morn like some budding flower, and exhibiting changes which no eye save a mother's could discern, hastened the recovery of Bertha, and induced her to appoint the Christmas-eve for the celebration of thanksgiving for her restoration. The old steward advised that it should take place in the chapel of the castle; but his lady preferred that the ceremony should be performed in the church where her husband lay interred, and where her son had been baptized.

The merry clear-toned Christmas bells chimed forth in the star-lit dawn over the snow-clad fields, when the Lady Bertha awoke her attendants, and ordered them to prepare for the procession. While they were thus employed, their mistress stood at the window, and saw through the morning twilight the dark forms of the inmates of the castle, as they hastened over the crisp frozen snow of the fore-court to her son's apartments, whilst crowds of peasants trudged past the iron lattice gates, on their way to the church. She felt an uneasy, painful joy at the thought of standing with her child over the grave of his father, as if she was about to behold that loved form once again. It was still somewhat dark, when, warmly clad herself, and with her babe equally well wrapped up and closely pressed to her bosom, she left his nursery.

The venerable Francis awaited her presence in the ante-chamber at the head of the domestics and retainers of the castle; his hair of silver white shone in the light of the wax tapers, which half mingled, half contrasted with the approaching beams of day, diffused a dubious and uncertain reflection, like hope dawning o'er the grave; and the minds of all present seemed even thus gloomy and doubtful.

The church, now lit up with tapers, which brought out some

portions of the sacred edifice in strong relief, and threw others again into as deep a shade, looked this morning so like the old picture, that Bertha, when the peasantry knelt down, could scarcely resist indulging in the deception that she beheld before her, as in that painting, the Matron in their midst; and at each moment did she expect to see her Otho come forth towards her from the narrow door which led to the family vault, and, smiling with pallid countenance upon herself and on their sweet babe, join his voice in those old and sweetly pious harmonies which had for so many centuries been chaunted and echoed forth within those venerable walls, and had ever continued to awaken the same all-powerful, sacred feelings. She wept in deep emotion; and yet she felt elated with joy, as if in this dawning the confines of the world of spirits were gradually opened, and all times dissolved in that *one* near at hand and brief.

The service was now ended. The day shone bright without, as they returned through the court of the castle. Here the view of the spot where, coming, as now, from church, she had embraced her Otho for the last time, so increased her emotion that she was compelled to turn away her looks. She raised them sideways on high to the windows of the corridor which ran behind the chambers of her son; and above, at one of those same windows, she beheld the White Lady! No veil covered her face; but her features were not discernible behind the glass, although Bertha plainly distinguished their death-like paleness. Her first impulse was to look round for old Francis; his name was already on her lips. She, however, collected herself, looked up again at the window—but nothing was now visible: so that she was herself in doubt whether or not her fancy might have deceived her.

On the evening of this day the Lady Bertha dismissed her women, for the first time since the birth of her child, from attendance in her room at night, and again slept alone. A festival of the servants and dependants of the castle celebrated at this moment the occasion of the thanksgiving; and the distant sounds of joy reached her chamber and struck upon her ear and heart once more as in times, alas! now past. Bright recollections, like beams of golden sunshine, contrasted with the present, which lay lonely and sad before her, and yet was cheered and blessed by the gentle

breathing of her boy, listening to which she sat beside his cradle, her eyes now fixed on him, now engaged in the records of the lives of the venerable hermits which lay open before her, and which gradually drew her thoughts from her own fate to a world full of simplicity, inspiration and wonder.

The attendant of little Otho had already several times anxiously and longingly listened to the distant sounds of the music, and the resounding merry peals of laughter. Her lady had observed this when glancing from her volume: accordingly she bade her bring the cradle of the child into her own apartment beside her bed, light the night-tapers, and assist her to undress; which having done, she dismissed her, and let her go to join the rest.

She was obeyed; and she now lay in bed, when the thought—"How if the White Lady should suddenly stand before me in this solitude!" pierced her with shuddering fright. Still there was no one sufficiently near whom she could summon; and, meantime, nothing mysterious having presented itself, and exhausted by the excitement of the past day, Bertha sank into a tranquil slumber.

Chap. X.

The Gift from the Dead.

Scarcely had sleep gradually enwrapped her thoughts from the scenes of reality around her, than a sweet and charming dream completely enchained her senses. She beheld therein her Otho standing before her bed, the same exactly as when living, only that he looked more serious and beautiful. He looked down with a smile on his son, and kissed him. He then turned his eyes across the cradle at her, with a sweet and affectionate look; he then approached her, and with his pale and shadowy hand placed on her fore finger a ring, the same as that worn by the Matron, and kissed her forehead. His breath fell gently o'er it like a cool and refreshing breeze, which she fancied she could actually feel, and by which she thought she was awoke, and about to rise to meet him. Then it seemed to her in her sleep as if she awoke again, and saw

the Matron disappearing by the door of the chamber; yet sleep still held her fastened in its bands, and she slept undisturbed until the break of day.

Her first looks on waking were directed to the cradle of her child; it was no longer close to her own bed, but had been removed to its former place. By chance her eye fell at this moment on her right hand, with which she had just drawn aside the curtain, and she was suddenly overwhelmed with a shuddering feeling of awe and wonder, for on her forefinger was encircled the ring of the White Lady!

She was at a loss how to act—whether to take it off or leave it on. Tears of terror and doubt fell from her eyes, and bedewed it. It was a fiery, brilliant ruby, without device or ornament, set in plain gold. At length she drew it from her finger. On the inside was engraved: "M. a. R. 1129, on the day of the summer equinox." Thence it appeared to be a wedding ring: yet what meaning was she to ascribe to such a gift? Did it call her to her husband, who had placed the ring on her finger while she slept, and to whom she felt her wedded love attracted her on high, while her dear affection's ties towards her beloved child enchained her not less to the earth below? Or had she, while half asleep, confounded the features of Otho and the Matron? Had she perhaps really received it from *her?* Was it to be the means of placing herself in relation with her? Agitated by such doubts, she passed the day in anxious expectation; but it ended calmly and undisturbed as usual. The night came—yet no dream which might explain the mysterious gift disturbed her slumbers.

"Knowest thou this ring, good Francis?" she inquired next morning of the old steward.

"Assuredly, my noble lady; that is the White Lady's ring!" he exclaimed, as he looked at his mistress anxiously, and with an inquiring glance.

"Even so!" she replied. "Either she or my husband placed it on my finger while I was asleep. I saw them both in a dream. Advise me, good Francis, what I am to do with it. Or is it perhaps intended, think you, to summon me from my child?"

The old man shook his head, and was silent. "Who can say what *they* intend who explain not their meaning to us by word of

mouth?" he said after some time. "Yet," he continued, as his features brightened to a smile, "from the aspect in which the White Lady appeared to me in the hour of the young prince's birth, I should not think that she wishes to portend death to you by the gift of the ring. My belief is, that she knows you, my noble lady, that she loves you, and that the ring is intended as a gift to the youthful mother of this house, on the occasion of her thanksgiving to God. But—advise what you ought to do with it—*that* I dare not, noble lady."

"In what you have said, good Francis," answered his mistress, "you have only expressed my own feelings, and I have formed the same conclusion. I have decided therefore not to suffer the ring to quit my finger, but preserve it as a sacred relic: by doing this, I feel it can bring no harm either to myself or my child. For the rest I will follow your former counsel, and committing myself to the will of Heaven, banish, as much as possible, all other thoughts upon the matter, until some indisputable sign beckons to take another direction."

The Lady Bertha, however, found it not so easy to follow out this resolution. The expression in the countenance of the Matron, the resemblance between her features and those of Otho, the sympathy which the apparition testified for her and her child, the frightful judgment on the dead—all these subjects often deeply agitated and afflicted her. A secret doubt whether, nevertheless, the day of the summer equinox might not be her last on earth, still clung to her mind, and the more especially as the White Lady had not since appeared either to her or any one else in the castle.

Chap. XI.

The Old Man's Legacy.

The winter was past—the summer equinox was fast approaching; when one morning the venerable steward—who spent several hours in the early part of each day by the cradle of the little Otho, carried the infant in his arms, and was delighted when the child grasped

his silver locks with his little fingers—made not his appearance as usual. Bertha inquired after him, and heard to her sorrow that he was unwell. Soon after this, an orphan boy, the child of his deceased daughter, whom he had adopted, entered her room, and begged her ladyship to come to his grandfather. "He is sitting in his arm-chair," said the child, "and says he shall never rise from it again; and he wishes much to see you, my lady."

She followed the boy immediately. She found the aged man sitting near the open window, in his old-fashioned cleanly apartment, looking out on the gentle haze of the early spring morning, which had gathered round the tops of the hills and the trees.

"When the young leaves appear, the stem must throw off the few old ones which have lingered beyond their time," said the good old man, calmly, as he pointed from the window to the budding trees outside.

"What mean those words, my kind old friend?" exclaimed Bertha; "surely you would not wish to leave me?"

"Not *wish* it, noble lady," he returned; "one would willingly remain where one has lived so happily, and so long; but a time does come, and now that time has arrived and completed itself. It was but yesterday that I received a warning; this day I feel it was rightly given and will be realized, and therefore it was that I wished to speak with your ladyship." And he continued: "The White Lady, my noble mistress, has appeared to me. She was standing in the gallery, from the windows of which we overlook the church and church-yard, when I entered it. I preserved my silence as usual, and wished to continue my unbroken course; but she intercepted my path, pointed for a length of time with her shrivelled finger to the church-yard beneath, then turned aside, went slowly on, with her eyes fixed constantly on me. When arrived at the door, she stopped, raised her hand first towards me, then to Heaven, shook her head sorrowfully, and then vanished. I understood at once that this was meant as her last farewell to me on earth: and Heaven be praised, I have done my duty, and I am ready! One thing now alone remains to be done. Behold! noble lady, this casket; it is a heirloom which my forefathers on their death-bed have successively bequeathed from son to son, from generation to generation. The key is, however, wanting: nor have

we ever known what is contained therein, nor whence its origin. But each succeeding guardian on his death-bed ever declared that its contents were of hallowed importance to this illustrious house; that it must not be opened by any other but its own key, if it be wished not to bring over the head of a dear and valued member of the family the most fatal calamity and heavy judgment. You know, noble lady, that it is not fitting here to treat with indifference those things which might perchance elsewhere be regarded lightly; accordingly, as my daughter's son, the nearest of my descendants, is but a mere boy—not yet attained to years of discretion, I confide the precious casket to your ladyship's care."

The boy stood next to his grandfather, and looked anxiously in his face. The old man placed the casket in the Lady Bertha's hands in silence; his last words seemed to have completely exhausted his remaining strength. He smoothed down the fair locks of the boy; he would fain have bent towards the youth, in order to embrace him, but his head sunk down on his breast; he breathed deeply, and his parting smiles were illumined by the genial rays of the refreshing morn of spring.

Bertha had understood his last request, which was thus anticipated by death. She took the child with her to her room, and tried to console and cheer him, while she gave directions to have him placed under the best superintendence the castle afforded. She then placed the mysterious casket under lock and key; though not without considerable anxiety, for she felt that it was connected with the fate of the Matron, and that its safe keeping was inseparably linked with the chain of her mysterious history. Its exterior consisted of ebony, beautifully inlaid with gold, ivory, with mother-of-pearl and variegated stones; the work was of the Byzantine period of art, very ancient, but in an admirable state of preservation.

Meanwhile, the anxiety excited in the mind of Bertha by the possession of the casket, proved to be as unfounded as that which had been occasioned by the gift of the ring. The funeral of the aged Francis, and the immediately following summer equinox, passed by, and she still lived; the course of her days proceeded naturally, undisturbed by any mysterious event: so much so, that amid this continually secure uniformity, she, at times, cherished the wish to investigate the mystery of the old picture. But a profound dread still served to act as a check on this wish.

Chap. XII.

The Golden Key.

About this time her little Otho fell ill, and the blooming child drooped more and more, apparently past all recovery. Less and less frequent were the moments when it was possible by a flower or a toy to win from his cherub face a passing smile. The sorrowing mother bore him continually in her arms, rested his feverish and aching head upon her bosom, and long did she struggle in silence and in sadness with the anxious fear that this last and dearest tie of her existence would be snatched from her.

One night, at length, the little sufferer presented little or no hope of surviving until the morning. She sat beside his cradle, and watched him with unchanged, unwearied looks; her poor heart was in an agony of anguish and despair. At one moment she half wished all might be over, and that, beyond the reach of all mortal pain, he might have been borne to Heaven, there to join the choir of angels; and then again she shuddered to think of her own state, and how she should be enabled to support such a painful visitation.

The early light of morning now broke in upon this mournful scene, when, exhausted with fatigue, she sank into a gentle slumber. When after a slight repose she looked around in affright, she beheld seated on the opposite side of the cradle—the White Lady! Terrified with this sight, and painfully struck with the thought that the child must be dead, she sat motionless with horror, and gazed upon the boy. But her treasure lay there, with refreshed and open eyes, looked at her, and held in his hands a wreath of rosemary, brilliants, and pearls, with which he was playing with happy cheerfulness.

"Know me, if thou wilt!" breathed a soft and gentle voice. "Thou seest me no more unless thou seekest me!"

The White Lady now rose up and quitted the room with noiseless step. Bertha remained in a state of tremour. Terror and delight held

enchained her lips and her whole form. She then fell on her knees, caught up her child, held it in her arms, then raised it to Heaven with a flood of tears, trembling, sobbing, rejoicing, praying.

The nurse still slept soundly. By degrees the agitated mother became more calm; she now wished to turn her infant, and place it more comfortably on its couch; she then observed on the pillow beneath its head some newly-plucked herbs, and remarked that the child smiled the more cheerfully the nearer she brought them to his head. She carefully collected them together, and placing them there, she proceeded to examine the wreath with which the boy was playing. This consisted of a plain gold ring. At regular distances there were large pearls, flowers formed of variegated precious stones, set in massive gold, with a branch of rosemary twined round the whole.

She gave the wreath into the child's hand, and was about to spread the coverlid over him, when between its folds glittered a golden key, of the same antique and splendid workmanship as the wreath and the casket, to which latter it evidently belonged.

Bertha looked at it with terror, and for a length of time she hesitated to touch it. She then cast a look at her child, and immediately took the key. Thus the opening of the mysterious cabinet appeared now to be confided to her charge. It was indeed impossible to avoid doing the office, for the Matron had evidently saved her child. Yet cold tears of dread filled her eyes at this thought. She, however, looked again at her child now recovering and reviving with every moment, and her feelings as a mother overcame every other. Lost in joy, and forgetting all else save her boy, she watched him as he gently fell into a quiet, happy slumber before her delighted eyes.

Chap. XIII.

The Resolution.

The morning had dawned and continued its course in triumph amid the minstrelsy of the feathered tribe, the harmonious sounds

of joyous industry, echoed forth over the flower-strewn earth, and its bright, transparent streams. The nurse of little Otho now awoke, and was wonderstruck and delighted at the sudden recovery of her young lord. The joy diffused itself over the whole castle. The inmates hastened to see the young prince, to testify their delight and sympathy; and this cheerful sound awoke the Lady Bertha from the silent forgetfulness of the extacy in which she had passed the last few hours.

These emotions of delight were too much for a heart accustomed so long only to sensations of the most opposite and painful kind; she was unable to restrain her feelings, and she hastened from within the narrow limits of the walls, to give loose to her gratitude and joy amid the solitude and silence of nature.

She was struck, as if anew, with the peculiar beauties of nature's scenery and its objects, which now met her everywhere around, so full of life; and she was astonished to find that the earth could still contain for her that source whence might still be apportioned to her so much pain, so much happiness. Joy seemed now, as it were, newly born for her. But the thought of the Matron, her fate, and her judgment, became nevertheless more and more a subject of the deepest interest and importance, and her feelings of sympathy were only the more strongly excited by the fear of her appearing being removed, from the assurance so solemnly expressed by the Matron herself—"Thou seest me no more unless thou seekest me."

She felt a shudder come over her whole being at the thought of approaching too closely the secret confined within the limits of the other side of the grave. Gladly would she have been relieved from the office of opening the mysterious casket, but which the present of the key now called upon her to exercise. Yet there remained not the slightest doubt but that the White Lady herself was the member of the family who was threatened with the direst misfortune in case the casket should be opened by the improper party; on the other hand, equal mischief might ensue to the Matron if the opening of the casket were neglected. And were, then, to *her* those limits so strange, so unknown, beyond which her thoughts flew every hour to seek her beloved husband? And ought *she* to be so terrible to her—she who was the mother of her husband's line of ancestors,

and of her own child, who bore her beloved's very features, and who, like him, had shown to herself nothing but overflowing love and sweet benevolence? She shuddered: her anguish broke forth in tears: still she felt herself impelled: an irresistible necessity urged her to open the casket, whatever consequences might result therefrom.

As soon as she had reached her chamber she fastened the door, offered up a prayer to Heaven, then, with firm hand, took the golden key, and applied it to the lock of the casket: it fitted exactly, and the lid flew open without the slightest obstruction.

The interior of the casket was completely covered with mother-of-pearl. A packet presented itself, enveloped in silk, embroidered with gold. This Bertha immediately took up, removed the covering, and a parchment, in a good state of preservation, written in light and beautiful characters, lay before her, and, although the letters and the style were both of antiquated form and appearance, she was, nevertheless, perfectly able to make out and read as follows:

Chap. XIV.

The Manuscript of Centuries.

"My name is Juditha, and I am the daughter of Prostibor. I was born, and enjoyed the season of childhood, like all other mortals. My father's castle was the place of my birth, and there I lived until my sixteenth year. At that time there came to us Lord Markwart von R——; he was four-and-twenty years of age, manly, kind, and handsome. To me it was the dearest news of my heart when I was informed that I was to repair with him to his castle, there to dwell with him, and pass my life in love and peace, the same as my beloved mother with my father in the home of my birth. Great was the joy expressed by all the younger members of our household, and the vassals of my father, many of whom followed in my train, to afford all necessary service and assistance.

"I was dressed in a purple-coloured robe; my flaxen hair was curled; and a golden coronet was placed on my head, as being the daughter and the betrothed bride of a high and mighty noble. Our procession halted before the church adjoining my future lord's castle. It was but newly endowed, and adorned with rich carved work. I was lifted from my palfry, and led by my noble bridegroom to the altar. How handsome did he not look, in his suit of steel armour, adorned with gold! how did I not delight in him, and in my own lot, before Heaven, the saints, and mortals! and how fondly did I pledge the vow to be his in love and truth for ever! He then presented me with a gold ring, in which a purple stone was set: his father had brought this ring from Palestine, the grave of our Saviour, whither he had repaired, one of the first crusaders, with the blessing of Pope Honorius. Inside the ring was inscribed the year, the day, and the name of the Lord of Markwart. Those were dear and precious words to me!

"The castle of my husband was situated in a beautiful country. Mountains, crowned with fortresses, bordered the horizon; the level lands consisted of far outstretching fields of corn, rich meadows, and dense forests, amid which flowed the peaceful waters of a sweet, refreshing stream. The castle itself was protected by moats, high walls, and towers, placed at intervals; and the interior filled with numerous inmates. I had to bestow my care on all, and all returned my attentions; all evinced the deepest and most sincere care and attachment towards the wedded partner of their lord.

"When I had given birth to my first daughter, it so happened that Mainhard, the holy Bishop of Prague, paid us a visit, on his road to the Holy Sepulchre, and offered to baptize our child. On this occasion there were present, in honour of my lord, many nobles and knights, with their ladies, matrons, and daughters. From Swabia came Sir Conrad of Beutelspach; and the brothers, Hermann and William, lords of Sulzbach, who founded the convent of Wylemow, now in ruins. Yonder their bodies have long since reposed in peace, and their souls have ascended to heaven with those around them. But *my* soul has never yet been released from earth!

"My parents likewise came, together with all my brothers and

sisters, and they wondered at me in my coif and veil, a housewife and a mother, and they were delighted with what the strangers related of the splendid city of Byzantium beyond the sea, of the other towns and castles of the infidels in the Holy Land, and on the river Nile, of deserts, where nought is to be seen but earth and sky, day and night; and then they would return to and dwell upon the beauties of their own cheerful home along the river Neckar and the Inn, in imperial Germany, the sister land of Bohemia.

"I, too, was pleased with the cheerful subjects of discourse which enlivened our halls, and shared the joy of our lord among his guests; but still more was I delighted to steal to the chamber of my child, there to gaze upon it as it reposed so sweetly on its couch, and then I returned to busy myself about the castle, in the larder or the cellar, providing for the entertainment of its noble father and his guests: for truly did my heart rejoice at the honour thus bestowed on him, my parents, and myself, when I bore my child in my loving arms to the font, there to dedicate it to Heaven, in the presence of so many noble witnesses.

"Two young mothers, who had come with me to the castle, had given birth to their children at the same time with myself, and they now, like their mistress, carried their infants to the church, there to be baptized at the same font, by the same holy man, and before the same company. These faithful followers were greatly delighted at this happy circumstance; equally happy were all the other members of the household, but the most happy of all was their mistress. So many things happened in those times to make me joyful!

"I had three children in succession, two daughters and a son—a sweet union of brotherly and sisterly love, continually affording new joys to their happy father and myself. The space in the castle became more and more occupied and insufficient for the wants of its numerously-increasing inhabitants. I had much to make me active, from the early morn to the closing night; yet, from day to day my spirits and my strength increased in proportion to my task, for my Lord Markwart advised me in all things firmly and faithfully. Now our servants married each other, and required farther help and protection; now some building here or there on our estate required completion; or now some fresh land was to be

tilled, when all had been carefully attended to for the provision of the present moment and the supplies of the season. My noble husband and myself consulted together each other's pleasure and will in everything. Nothing but a state of constant happiness of mind and heart was apportioned to me then, as I can now retrace, for many, many years, even as if one perpetual sunshine beamed upon my heart!

"On the death of Duke Sobieslaus at his own new castle of Hastin-Hradeck, my lord and husband, Markwart, repaired to Prague, there to attend at the council of nobles then assembled, to adjudge upon the succession of the sovereign power; and when he was gone, and the time was come that I knew he was journeying through lands unseen by me and unknown, I lost all power of thought: I was no longer in a frame of mind to ponder over the requisites for each coming day; my children, my servants, were no longer the same to me. I became languid and feeble. What happiness, therefore, did the news communicate to my heart which told me that Wladislaus the Second was elected duke, and my lord was on his return to the castle! The very territory itself, with all its lovely fields and valleys, seemed to rejoice when its lord stood once more upon it. He arrived, and all pursued its former course, all assumed its former cheerful aspect.

"In the following year I bore my last child; nor did I ever love those previously born so fondly as I did this. We named the girl Przibislawa. She did not resemble my lord Markwart, nor was she like me; she was like herself alone in the world; she was a child that seemed as if belonging to a better world. She was ever serious, yet therewithal ever smiling, and her whole nature and appearance were inexpressibly sweet and pleasing. My other children grew up, and their looks changed; nor could I longer recognize the face of either as it was in childhood. She, however, grew taller and more beautiful, but still remained the same in look. When I beheld her as a maiden, in her walks about the castle or garden, or when sitting at church, I felt as if I saw her still as formerly, when she came smiling and running up to me in her childhood. Yet I neither testified to her nor to the others the gratification I felt in this; all were alike dear to my heart, for their own and their father's sake; nor could I have made a choice from

among them. It was only to my lord Markwart that I confided what I felt.

"Neither had I time for reflection on this matter: my heart could not dwell on any single joy, for I had much to advise upon, and desired always to attend to all. I knew man and woman and child, every beast, every bird's-nest, as well as every tree and plant upon our domain: I had watched and carefully tended each in turn, with the joy of my eyes and the affection of my heart.

"Our eldest daughter now made choice of a holy life, apart from the world, within the sacred walls of a cloister. We conveyed her to Prague, to the convent of St. George, there to enter on her noviciate; and we parted from her in the hallowed peace of those holy halls, and I wept over her with mingled feelings of comfort and sorrow.

"Soon after this her sister was betrothed, and our son chose a noble maiden for his bride: we desired they should be happy early, as we ourselves had been. We therefore fitted up a castle for the reception of our new daughter, whither our son might bring her home as its future mistress. We filled the rooms with furniture and plate, and I selected servants for my daughter, and instructed them in their duties. Alas! these were pleasing cares; and it seemed to me as if I was planting my life anew, to flourish a second time in a new soil.

"Przibislawa made choice of Lord Odolenus of Chisch. He was her father's favourite, and gained her affections by his manly and faultless character. Although still so young, our nobles had selected him from amongst the best, as arbitrator in all their feuds and disputes. His understanding was clear and correct, his appearance was stately, his eye was piercing, his noble forehead stern and lofty. Few and brief were the words which fell from his swelling, youthful lips. He seemed, indeed, almost too strict and rigid for my gentle child!

"Our house was blessed with grandchildren just at the moment when Przibislawa's nuptials approached, and when our eldest daughter was about to perform her holy vow. Our children, therefore, all wished to meet once more at the paternal castle. The rooms were all soon filled, and were almost too small to hold so many beloved guests; and when now the married couples,

with their new-born infants, arrived, and in their company the servants whom we had given them, and who came to visit the friends whom they had left behind on our domain — when we received all these persons in the castle court, and when the young mothers showed me their babes, whose faces displayed alike the features of my beloved husband and of my children—when I raised them in my arms on high to the blue heavens above—when around me all were eagerly pressing, cordially greeting and joyfully shouting forth their warm and hearty congratulations—when from the youthful, blooming countenances of the new parents I turned my eyes upon my eldest child, in whose features the gravity of devout meditation had already impressed the traces of profound and holy peace—her companion on earth when the pleasures of youth yielded to the joys of heaven —when, I say, I looked on the joyous crowd that surrounded me, and which all belonged to me, and then gazed on the noble and open countenance of my lord and husband, Markwart, and beheld mirrored, as in a glass, a long series of days, as happy, and some perhaps even happier, than the present—my transport had neither bound nor limit! I rejoiced with the young mothers like a sister, I rejoiced over them like a mother, I rejoiced in the present, I rejoiced still more in the future.

"Hand-in-hand we sat round the stone table in the fragrant shade of the lime-trees, looking far and wide over the sunny landscape. Suddenly in the distance a cloud of dust was seen; it approached nearer; we descried a glittering of armour; banners were seen to wave, the banners of Duke Wladislaus, bearing the Bohemian eagle; it was the herald of the duke, who, having now advanced, summoned Lord Markwart, with his son and sons-in-law, to Prague, within three days, thence to proceed to Würzburg, to attend the marriage of the Emperor Frederick of Hohenstauffen with the Lady Beatrice of Burgundy. The nobles looked at each other with an expression of doubt and inquiry; but Lord Markwart nodded his assent to the herald—and that moment closed upon my happiness for ever!

"My mind, from that fatal day, never recovered its cheerful serenity, notwithstanding all that my beloved husband and my children might say to console me by the assurance of their safe

return. I was no longer able to cherish this hope. When the career of joy is once checked, rarely, if ever, does it resume its course.

"On the third day—that which my lord destined for the nuptials of Przibislawa—the steeds were led forth, and the young men took leave of their wives and sisters, myself and their babes. My lord, now having mounted, took my hand, and held it; he ventured not to speak, lest he should betray his deep emotion, and his voice be thus overpowered; but he looked in my face, which, for some time, I dared not raise to his. At length I looked up to him, when he smiled sadly, but consolingly; and now Lord Odolenus, with the impetuosity of youth, sprang first over the drawbridge; Lord Markwart then slowly turned on his horse, pressed my hand, loosed it as I gazed on him for the last time, and then my heart was nigh to burst with agony within my bosom. Oh, that I had indeed never beheld him more on earth again!

"In the vacant, spacious apartments all was now silent and deserted: I felt myself overcome with anxiety and alarm as I wandered through them. My children seemed but half allied to me, now that their father no longer looked at them with me. My daughters were young and eager; the pain of absence afflicted them but little, compared with myself, the wedded one of so many years. The separation weighed upon my breast far heavier than in my youth. My poor heart beat faintly, and sank beneath its painful burden; my limbs were more and more feeble and powerless; my senses became confused; I seemed to have no faculties, no wish but that of living until the day of his return, of beholding that happy future when my joy should be continued more and more enriched, and when I should again be enabled to care and provide for those whom I so loved, so dearly prized.

"But the power and the hope of attaining this desire grew less and less within me. I constrained myself to breathe more freely, to direct my feeble steps more securely and more firmly, and to collect together all my remaining strength of mind for my customary duties; but the effort became more and more vain from day to day. The nearer approached the day of their return, the more did my strength abandon me. I looked towards it as my deliverance; I hoped to survive until that day should arrive.

"But vain was that hope! A few days only intervened, when I awoke one morning in my bed, without the power to move, and my throbbing heart and brain tortured with the thought as if of some dark prophecy—'No more shalt thou see the absent!' and my anguish became indescribable. My women, soon after entering, were shocked at my looks, and hastened away. My daughters came: they knelt beside my bed, and my holy daughter alone it was who conquered her tears and her grief. I wept with the rest; I wept more bitterly than they. I could not bear to die. I caused my grandchildren to be brought and my servants to be summoned. All came round my bed. I clung to life: they all linked me to it!

"And the holy priest now approached, and pronounced over me his blessing, and warned me that my hour was near, when I must quit this world and all it contained so dear to me, at God's command, and that it was now my duty to turn my thoughts to Him who had ordained this affliction—if it should befall me and mine—in mercy, and for my salvation.

"I would not hear the pious man to the end. I wept; I bade him be silent, and not call *that* a mercy which would snatch me away in the fullness of my life from so many objects of my love, without even a parting from the dear companion of my youth and age.

"Then my eldest daughter threw herself on her knees beside my bed, and, with folded hands, spoke so sweetly and so solemnly of the darkness of mortal vision; she assured me I should soon bless even this my fate, and with smiles more blissful than now, look down on her father, on her, on her brothers and sisters, and on my home, if I would now but turn my heart to God, and devote all my thoughts to, and rest all my hopes on Him alone.

"I heard only the sweet sound of her voice; I felt nothing but the joy of her holiness. 'Pray, pray to God,' I cried, 'that I may live!' But, alas! to my unspeakable anguish, I felt myself growing weaker and weaker every moment, in the struggle I maintained against death.

"The priest then knelt again, and prayed beside me, as he presented the sacred symbols of religion; but I pushed them aside, and bade him cease, and not invoke my death. I renounced in

my heart all happiness save that of seeing once more my lord and husband, of remaining with my children, and all those so dear to my heart in that home in which I had dwelt so long in peace, on this beauteous earth: and my thoughts recoiled from every other object with abhorrence.

"But weaker and weaker grew my breath; I constrained myself by force to sustain it, and I strove with all my sinking powers to inhale air and life with exhausted, agonized lungs. The priest prayed aloud for my salvation. I cursed his prayer; it seemed to me as if it only hastened the coming of death. I ordered him to be taken from my sight. I invoked—I besought heaven, with the utmost effort of gasping passion, to grant me life—life—life!

"This prayer was my last thought, and then a deep slumber irresistibly took possession of my entire consciousness. It was a long repose of unspeakable delight; a state no longer of breathing, yet existing; of floating, as if without effort, on the wings of thought; no longer feeling or thinking, yet of observing all things in infinite clearness. I beheld, as it were, the earth with her day and night, her light and shade, her starry firmament, her beauteous verdure, so fresh and green, the busy rounds of life, the ever-varying connection of nature and innocence with God—contemplations teeming with peace from heaven, like a revelation from on high, freed from all association with bodily pain, pleasure, or anxiety. I had no desire to return to the past state of trial and infliction.

"And now there arose before me a form resembling man, but far more lofty and noble, of such infinite radiance of figure and of countenance, that, compared with such splendour, the light of the sun were dim—contrasted with its purity, that of the moon a gloomy shade. He fixed his eyes upon me, full of the piercing sternness of judgment. He spoke not, yet I knew and comprehended the meaning he conveyed—'Thou hast begged for life with the prayer of acceptance; thy prayer is granted; live free from death until ——.'

"Here my vision of death dissolved into a slumber of life, and I lost the close of the sentence. The apparition faded from my sight, the power of breathing returned, and I felt the burden of earthly existence again rising and sinking within my bosom; I heard hollow, earthly sounds from time to time, dark and gloomy shades surrounded me, and a red light glimmered above my head.

"I opened my eyes; I recognised the lamp in our family vault burning over me. I lay in my coffin, wrapped in my shroud, whilst the funeral bell tolled in the tower above, and the knell pealed for me! I was once more alive! The feeling of life weighed heavily upon me after the recollection of the new existence which had just passed away. My first thought was of my husband—my children—all that was mine, and, full of joy, I quickly arose, and only wished to quit the vault to meet them.

"The gates of the vault and the folding doors of the church stood wide open, an unknown impulse drew me through, and I found myself in the open air. Wide around me lay the landscape in the misty light of the moon; the knell tolled on; I beheld a dark funeral procession surrounded by torches—it slowly approached. Trembling with inward horror I longed to ascertain what it meant, to discover who lay on the bier, and at once I stood beside it. In sudden haste the bearers put it down, and fled; the attendants threw away their torches, and like the rest, fled with gestures of terror. The whole procession was scattered in a moment on my appearance—I stood alone beside the coffin—I pulled away the pall that covered it, and by the light of the moon, and the torches still burning on the ground, I recognised my lord and husband, beheld him dead before *me*, his wife, so newly called to life again! I threw myself prostrate on the coffin; I pressed my warm and breathing lips, my painfully breaking heart, on his calm and death-closed mouth, on his silent, unmoved breast. O! life—life—life!

"The morning sun soon rose over the earth; the larks greeted each other with their early song; every living object had its kindred to meet—and I—I also had children, and grandchildren. I thought first of my lovely Przibislawa —— and in the same moment I found myself transported to her apartment, to the foot of the couch on which she reposed.

"She was completely dressed, and seemed to have wept herself to sleep. Her hands were folded on her bosom in the same attitude in which, when a child, she used to fall asleep when troubled with some childish grief. Yet her sweet countenance glowed not now as then; it was pale, and so full of woe that it pierced my inmost

soul; and on her cheeks were traces of her tears. Long did I gaze upon her, but waked her not, for I wished not to disturb her repose, until at length I could no longer bear that look of affliction, and involuntarily I pronounced her beloved name.

"'Mother!' she cried, without unclosing her eyes; and new tears broke forth. She raised herself up, sat awhile, looked wildly at me, and then completely awoke. I extended my arms to enfold her, but she sprang from the bed with a cry of affright, rushed past me from the room, and down the stairs, screaming loudly with terror.

"My thoughts fondly followed her, and the new and mysterious impulse, which impelled me forwards, hurried me after her steps. I had just reached her, and was about to clasp her in my embrace, when she sank to the ground lifeless. The doors of the corridor were opened, I saw my children and my faithful servants approach; but at the sight of me they hastily retired and shut the doors, and no one came to the aid of my poor Przibislawa. In vain I cried. I wished to be with my eldest daughter, to tell her my presence should no longer alarm them, but to beg them to hasten to the aid of their sister, and to assure them that they should see me no more.

"No sooner had I conceived this wish, than I found myself beside her, in the midst of our family circle in the sitting room. I beheld those so dear to my heart, all in their accustomed places, and all attired in mourning for their father and myself. But none flew to receive me; all turned pale, and regarded me with a shuddering feeling of terror and awe. My eldest daughter made the sign of the cross over them and herself, as a protection against *me* who loved them so! Their terror shocked and alarmed me, and my heart was about to break with agony and grief. I wished myself far away, in the most distant and solitary tower of the castle, and the wish was fulfilled in the same moment.

"No one since the time of Lord Markwart's father had inhabited this portion of the building. I lived here neither as a blessed spirit nor a mortal being; all earthly ties were loosened for me. I firmly resisted the natural impulse which would have led me into the midst of my children. I could no longer belong to them, nor they to me; the time of our union was past, the shuddering

awe of death separated us for ever; and yet I loved them still with all the force of life. Who had ever suffered such a doom as mine! But the ransom required by Providence was not yet paid.

"At midnight, when all around me was silent, when the stars, now, as ever, were watching over us in the dark blue heavens, my anxious desire to learn the state of my beloved Przibislawa, to know if she slept tranquilly, to listen to her gentle breathings, and to hover round the door of her chamber, became at length completely irresistible. And the same unconscious, mystic impulse bore me thither again. I heard moanings and whisperings in the room; I then suddenly heard her give a shriek. Methought it was indeed her voice, and yet again not like her voice; it was a scream so wild and hollow!

"Horror seized on me at that moment. No longer could I restrain my desire, and the fatal, new faculty of my soul fulfilled it. I stood again amid my children before the bed of Przibislawa on which she was sitting upright, but in a death-like state. She perceived me—she pressed her hands before her eyes with a piercing cry of anguish, and fell back on her pillow, where she lay stiffened and with dying eyes. I wished myself far, far away; and behold I was instantly in my lonely apartment of the tower as before. A quarter of an hour had now passed over me in silent, unspeakable anguish, when suddenly the mournful bell of death was tolled again and again. She was dead! My sweet child—my Przibislawa was no more! I, her mother, had produced her death!

"All uneasy, anxious desire after my children had now ceased. There, on high, where my soul longed to be, there, alas! no impulse bore me. And each noon when the sun stood high, and each evening when it sank in twilight, the knell resounded afresh, and awoke me from my heavy and fixed stupor. On the third evening it sounded longer and longer, and its sadly swelling tones rose again and again to my ears, and vibrated through my soul—for they were now bearing my child to the grave.

"But when all was hushed and silent, and midnight had arrived, I wished in my heart to be once more in the chapel, and in that vault from which I had so recently risen. And there I stood as I wished; I beheld them reposing beside each other—my daughter and my husband—and my own coffin empty between them. In it

I should have slumbered by the will of heaven; and my husband, glorified like the angelic being I had beheld in my vision, would now be advancing to welcome me to those celestial regions, the happiness of which I had witnessed, blessing with me our children on earth, at first alone with me for awhile, as we had been in our early existence on earth, before our children came to bless us here; until these would join us there one after another, when our early bliss on earth would be renewed and completed in heaven, growing only more infinite and more perfect through the course of eternity. But, alas! so blessed a lot I had impiously rejected!

"I sat down at the foot of the coffins, gazed with unspeakable delight on the dearly loved features of my husband, on the sweet countenance of my child, in their silent sleep of death, and meditated on the will of God with a heart broken, yet exalted by grief. I had no wish beyond this spot. I felt neither hunger nor thirst, nor was I subject to any other mortal desire or want; I was sustained by a spiritual life.

"But those dear and precious features faded fast away. The eyes sank deeper and deeper in their cavities, and deeper sank their wasted cheeks; and one morning, when a sunbeam falling obliquely through the ancient window of the vault, showed them more clearly to me again, there floated over the lips a bluish mist, which spread like a gentle veil over their countenances. I sank on my knees; I listened to and followed the voice of nature, which called me to part from them now, and to pry no further into what she would conceal.

"I was now once more transported to my room in the ancient tower, and there I resolved to continue my abode until relieved by the fulfilment of my doom."

Thus far had Bertha read without allowing herself to be interrupted by the tears which constantly obscured her eyes. Here, however, she paused awhile, and threw around the apartment a shuddering glance of fear and apprehension lest some impulse should have attracted the Matron towards her; but the chamber was empty, and she then recollected, with a mingled feeling of consolation, reverential pity, and almost of affection towards her, the words of her promise—"Thou seest me no more until thou seekest me." She then turned over the next leaf of the parchment manuscript, and continued to read further.

Chap. XV.

The Manuscript of Centuries continued.

"But the heart of a mother never rests. By degrees, and after a few months, my wishes revived to see once more my still beloved, living children. In the remote tower in which I dwelt, no sound from the inhabited portion could penetrate to bring me intelligence of them. This desire constantly increased, and late in the deep stillness of a moonlight night, I ventured to quit my chamber once again, in order to behold and bless them in their unconsciousness of my presence as they slept.

"With beating heart, and with tears of joy, when once more approaching those dear objects, I glided along the well-known passages which led to their chambers and sitting rooms. The palpitation of my heart might almost be heard, and even my light footfall echoed through the deep silence of the night. The windows of the corridor were brightly reflected by the moonlight on the ground, and not the slightest sound fell upon my ear. The first chamber, that in which I had dwelt in the fulness of joy and social affection, opened to me, but it was now empty and silent. I entered the second and the third, but from no bed proceeded the breathings of slumber, from no side any indication of life. Wardrobes and boxes stood open and exposed to view, some half empty, others again were untouched, and appeared as if undisturbed since I had myself arranged them. The furniture lay scattered around the rooms in confusion. I wandered through the whole suite of apartments, and every where existed the same disorder and neglect, and it was only from the casement of the porter's room that I at length perceived the light of a lamp. 'The alarm I inspired,' I said to myself, 'has driven away my children, and has rendered the home of their birth and of my happiness completely desolate!' My desire to see them—all my hopes died away in sorrow; I inwardly promised them from the bottom of my heart not to pursue them, nor recall their terror by my presence. I collected and arranged all their neglected

effects; I closed all the boxes and wardrobes, and employed myself in my former haunts until daylight.

"Years passed on. On one occasion, when my inclinations led me again to those apartments, I found them not altogether empty, and that the porter's wife was still there. She had first come to the castle with me, had carried her child to be baptized with mine, and I felt great and indescribable pleasure in beholding one of my own people. She, however, turned pale, stood aghast, and I expected the moment when she would fly from me as did all other living creatures. Yet she fled not, but remained with more firmness, although with downcast looks; she bowed reverently and in silence, and appeared to wait my pleasure. How was my heart revived by this silent intercourse with a living person! I returned her salutation by a grateful inclination of my head, and left her, in order not to cause her further anxiety or fear.

"Since a living being had now borne the sight of me, I felt again powerfully attracted to my children. I ceased to resist the desire which transported me to the spot where I was present in thought, and I stood before the bed of my eldest daughter. She was pale and haggard, youth and beauty had quitted her features, yet she slept sweetly and with heavenly content in her garment of horse-hair, and upon her hard couch, and seemed hastening towards that premature death which should transport her to a world of bliss. I gazed long and with an emotion of delight upon her countenance. Those who had departed, with whom I felt to be more nearly connected as it were than she was, were even already stretching out their hands through me to bless her and welcome her to heaven; while she seemed in like manner to be nearer to them than I was, and was hastening to meet them. Alas! I was at once blessed and accursed; belonging to heaven, yet banished from it; and must tarry on earth until my sentence be fulfilled. This, however, I knew, that whenever my deliverance might come, it must come from my children!

"In the next moment I found myself in the chamber of my eldest son. There he reposed; beside him lay his armour which he had cast aside, his noble, manly countenance unchanged, and his left hand clasping, as if in prayer, the right hand of his wife, whose features had become more serious and mild than when I had seen

them before. I now desired to be in my grandson's room, whither I was immediately transported. Three small beds were standing there; he lay in the largest, with his open countenance, and looking bold and fearless even when wrapt in sleep; in the second was a little girl, so like my dear eldest, holy child, that it seemed as if I beheld her in her cradle again, looking so innocent that every breath appeared to waft her back to that heaven which she had so recently quitted; the child in the third couch was but recently born, yet its features, though scarcely formed, seemed quite familiar to me!

"The same mystic impulse then transported me to the castle of my married daughter. Her lord and husband was absent; she was sleeping alone; in an adjacent cradle was her infant, her firstborn son. By the light of the opening dawn I contemplated them both. Calmly and in peaceful slumber lay the boy, his little hand clasped on his bosom, his open brow raised to heaven. I viewed him with unspeakable delight. He turned and opened his eyes, large and blue like those of my Przibislawa; he called out, and the dread of alarming his mother transported me again to my tower.

"My heart could still beat with joy, for so long as these features existed on earth, so long also did I belong to the earth! Often did I transport myself by night to their bedside. This, however, was only beholding them in sleep like lifeless images of themselves. How did I long to watch their looks, their actions, to hear their voices! but to appear to them while waking I never ventured again.

"The grand-children grew up, passing from childhood into youthful, mature age; whilst my children's countenances waxed old, and faded. Their time arrived to quit this earth; I saw it approach, and I awaited the hour with anxious pain. One night, when I found myself conveyed to the cell of my eldest daughter, I found it vacant; the night air was streaming through the empty space. My heart was swelling with the painful thought—does she already rest in her grave? And the next moment I found myself in the church of the convent; at my feet was a tombstone, which bore the escutcheon of my house, and beneath that her name. I was then to see her no more on earth; when should I see her again, and in heaven!

"Not long after, my son's wife slept alone in her widowed bed; then the apartment of my daughter and son-in-law was empty, and soon my daughter-in-law too was summoned away, and thus I mourned the death of all my children.

"For years and years did I confine myself within the silent walls of our castle, in the halls and chambers which had been the witnesses of my days, and now were silent and lonely as myself. Of all who had lived in youth with me, the wife of the porter alone survived. The nearer she approached the grave, the less she shunned me, and often would she regard me with a look of sympathy and pity. I was likewise present at her parting moments; she was succeeded by her son; thus I had survived all my generation, and was left alone, sole inhabitant of the castle!

"After many, many years, one morning, as the rising sun gilded my tower with its rays, I heard sounds issuing from a distant quarter of the castle, the neighing of steeds, the baying of hounds, the clamour of voices—sounds such as had echoed many past-gone years from its numerous and joyous inhabitants. Oh, what recollections of times past will not even a mere sound bring back! How did my poor heart, condemned, alas! never to know repose, swell with its emotions, with love for my children's children, and joy at the thought of being again among them!

"My mingled feelings of desire, yet dread, of being present amid the social throng, transported me to the ante-chambers and unvisited apartments, thus guarding myself from intruding on the gay visitors. Here I beheld suits of splendid armour, precious jewels, and ladies' attire, lavishly laid out, with a rich display of goblets, cups, and tankards, as for a banquet. A costly coat of mail, which my lord and husband Markwart used to wear, was among the armour with which my descendants encased themselves, and amidst the jewels with which their ladies adorned themselves, I saw a stomacher which it was my wont to wear on festive occasions, and which having been in the possession of my mother, I had given to my long-deceased daughter as a bridal present.

"I took out of a chest in my tower a cup of onyx stone, a bracelet of fine gold, and a cuirass of polished steel, on which Lord Markwart's armorial bearings were curiously inlaid in gold and silver, and which belonged to, and completed his suit of armour.

I laid the bracelet beside the stomacher, the cuirass by the coat of mail, and the cup I placed among the goblets, as tokens of welcome to my descendants.

"And when the bell began to chime for service, I waited at the window of the corridor that leads to my tower, and beheld my posterity as they proceeded through the court to church. A man, considerably past the middle age, headed the procession, with all my husband's calm and dignified deportment. His eye reminded me of that of my beloved Przbislawa; this was the son of my daughter. How often, oh, how often had I surveyed and watched him with delight when sleeping as a boy! By degrees I recognised my other grandchildren in the couples which followed immediately after him. But their companions, who also formed part of the train, were completely unknown to me. Young damsels, knights, and pages of noble birth, followed two by two. I beheld in their countenances the traces of many fresh features mingled with those resembling our family. They were the husbands and wives, sons and daughters of my descendants—all belonged to me. O immortal and ever-increasing treasure of maternal love!

"It was a marriage ceremony. All the present existing members of my house were here collected. I saw my descendants in their great-grandchildren assembled before the altar and on the same spot, where I had stood with my beloved husband to receive the blessing of heaven on our union; I beheld them entering on the same happiness, which I had once enjoyed, in presence of their parents, their kindred, their noble friends and dependants as witnesses; above them was the unchanged, undecaying structure whose carved dome had then received and protected me, whose vaults below had long since covered those who lived with me in that age, as well as those who had flourished since.

"And my eyes fell upon a side altar; there lay my gifts—cuirass, bracelet, and cup. My descendants had put them aside and dedicated them to the church; for me they knew not, cared not, nor felt aught else but terror when they thought of me. Alas! I could no longer afford joy or pleasure to the living.

"The newly-married pair remained in the castle. Although debarred from all intercourse with them, I still took delight in being near them, participated in their sorrow and their cares, felt

an interest in their possessions, rejoiced in their welfare and in that of their children, who again recalled to me the features of those I had formerly so fondly loved, and whom I loved once more in these.

"I became more and more intimate with all that belonged or related to them. I felt assured they must be conscious of my vigilant care, and I hoped that they at length might gradually learn to know me, and freed from their terrors on my account, might enquire for me, seek me out, and approach me. Could I but once be permitted to clasp either to my bosom, then would the throbbings of my sad and wearied heart be stilled, and transported on the gentle but buoyant wings of joy, I should be restored in bliss to my husband, and to the many dear departed ones of our race!

"The sound of footsteps—a sound I had all but forgotten—reached my tower, and approached my chamber. My soul already felt lighter under the burden of my frame, and I was overwhelmed with grateful feelings of delight. The latch was raised, the rusty bolt grated as it was drawn back, the door opened, and my great-grandchild entered the room. He saw me, shuddered, turned pale, and fled; the door shut behind him again—it has never since that day turned on its hinges more!

"From this time henceforth I no longer quitted my tower. The course of time rolled on, and I remained separated alike from the living and the dead.

"At length the sounds of life and action penetrated once more to my apartment. The castle echoed with rude wild cries of war, mingled with the tumult of weapons and the peal of the alarum bell. The summons was answered from village to village, from castle to castle, the whole country was roused to war, and bands of armed men with their banners hastened over the plain towards our castle. Anxiety again brought me among mankind.

"My grandchildren, both man and wife, were long since dead, and reunited beyond the grave, with my husband and children. Of their family the only surviving son was the present lord of the castle, a man far advanced in years. A savage heathen nation from the north-east, in countless hordes, was sweeping over the countries of Christendom, extirpating the inhabitants, plundering their possessions, burning and destroying towns and villages, and driving away the flocks and herds before them, leaving only a desert behind

them. They had thus forced their way from nation to nation, unchecked by mountains, rivers, or the opposition of armies, even to the frontiers of the holy Roman empire. And the christian knights of the realm, the noblest, bravest, and the best, both old and young, assembled on these threatened frontiers to oppose the barbarous and savage tribes, and in the name of heaven resolved to check their unhallowed course.

"The lamentations of the affrighted people, the danger and terror of my descendants, the fate impending over myself, of being forced to see them all so cruelly exterminated, and the very walls of our ancestral castle, which alone afforded me refuge from the hatred of mankind, razed to the ground; the fortresses and castles around all swept away, the entire scene presented by that lonely, familiar landscape before me, no longer to be recognized, but transformed into a desert; my people driven and hunted forth, destroyed; their very language forgotten and passed away, and I myself condemned to wander without a home among savage and unchristian hordes—I, an outcast from earth and heaven! The dread of all this drew me again with irresistible desire into the circle of the living, and overpowered the fear of alarming them by my appearance.

"The wives, daughters, and children of my house were trembling at home in their castles, praying for deliverance. The wish to be with my heroic sons had borne me to a wide plain on the frontiers. I sat on a stone on the border of a ploughed field, in the morning dew: before me, in order of battle, stood an army, arranged in three divisions; behind me were dreary plains; and in the distance rose the towers of a city. The shadows of the hindmost ranks, whose helmets glowed in the rays of the ascending sun, covered in gloom the foremost lines, and myself as well. The leaders, stepping forward, stood in a semi-circle before the troops, their heads divested of their helmets, as if preparing for some ceremony. I saw among the knights my great-grandson, the lord of our castle, his grey locks waving in the air. Among the youths next to him I beheld, as it were, the image of my beloved husband, still youthful, still living on the earth, in form and face such as I had seen him the first time when in my parents' house: this youth was at this moment extending his hand towards

the venerable commander, who held a banner, unfurled it, and, as he waved it, exclaimed—'Thus I spread forth thy banner; take it, and may it lead thee to glory!' * With joyous mien the heroic youth took the standard, held it high in the morning beams, and bore it to his warriors in the ranks, waving it over his head. Once again did I behold Lord Markwart's colours and crest fluttering in the breeze. Two youths followed the standard-bearer, a little in his rear; in them I beheld the features of my married daughter—the features of my son once more. The steeds of the three youths were brought. They shook each other by the hand, and mounted. The new standard-bearer gave his banner to an attendant knight. Their helmets were brought, they put them on, took up their position together in the foremost rank, with their vizors raised. I could still see their faces, and above them, high in the breeze of morn, waved the banner of our house.

"At this moment a wild uproar arose behind me. I looked round, and saw the distant depths of the horizon obscured by a savage, wide-spreading mass. The vizors of the warriors before me fell at once, and deprived me of the blessed sight of my children's faces. The troops were set in motion, drew in closer bodies to each other, and raised their spears. The war-cry behind me grew louder and more furious. I looked round again: the Tartars were now rushing on in wild disorder, with bended bows and hideous, horrid yells, their whole appearance savage and brutal. But the Christian battalions stood firm and unmoved. I cast one more look at my children and our house's banner, and then found myself again within the deep silence of my tower, in that lonely prison of my mortal body, my isolated chamber, snatched from all knowledge of the fate of those I loved, and before I had even formed the wish not to behold the sanguinary scene.

"My desire to witness the result of the conflict, anxious and powerful as it was, was repressed by the natural dread and horror of venturing to be an observer of it. The sun reached its meridian point above my tower, then declined and sunk. The shadows

* "Je derôle votre bannière!
Dieu vueil votre preux en faire!"
FROISSARD.

lengthened on the red, gleaming earth. The battle must be decided ere this. I only wished to see from a distance the squadrons in which my children fought; and before me, on the open plain, passed in full flight a troop of soldiers, completely disfigured with blood and dust, on jaded horses covered with foam. A few torn banners waved over them; but the banner of our house I could no longer discover among them: I still distinguished our arms and colours, but could nowhere behold my children.

"And I stood on the field of battle. The wide plain around me lay torn up and desolate; no plant was left upon it, no bird fluttered over it. I saw in the distance the ground strewed with corpses of men and horses, while ever and anon a fearful groan echoed through the silence. Nothing now of death had terrors for me; I longed to be with my offspring, if they were lying here, and, with a shudder of dread, I found myself hurried on by the same mystic impulse to the very centre of the battle-field, where the earth itself was still more violently torn up, and the dead lay huddled closer together. I closed my eyes in grief and horror, when a faint moan from the ground reached my ear from a beloved and well-known voice. I opened my eyes, and beheld, close to my feet, the son of my great-grandson, stretched at full length on his banner, his vizor closed. In his dying hand he grasped that of his younger kinsman, who lay dead beside him, with his vizor raised; across him lay the youngest, his helmet off, his palid face exposed. I threw myself on my knees beside him, loosed his collar and gorget; a black torrent of blood gushed from a deep wound in his throat. He opened his eyes for a moment, smiled a farewell at the setting sun, pressed my hand, and calmly breathed his last. I now looked beyond him, and saw the corpse of my great-grandson, the lord of the castle, who had fallen, it appeared, while hastening to the aid of the others. Thus all the sons of my race were consigned to destruction. It was only a life imperishable as mine that could sustain this load of grief!

"The lamentations in the castle extended as far as my solitary chamber in the tower. Again I heard the knell tolling over my head, hollow and unceasing. A long series of coffins was placed in our family vault, ranging from that in which I was appointed to repose. The inhabitants fled from the neighbourhood in every

direction. A profound silence reigned in the castle; desolation and solitude spread over the land. No bell now signified, by its sound, the hour of devotion or rest; all note of time had ceased. I looked day by day for the consummation of my sentence; I waited for the flames to burst forth from the castles to the north-east, announcing to me the ruin of our own, and I already fancied I beheld the entire country around overrun by the wild and barbarous heathens. This fate, however, was not in reserve for me.

"The fortresses which were left undestroyed still adorned the horizon. The landscape was gradually repeopled and reanimated with its peasants, flocks, herds, and sounds of active life; but the castle itself remained empty and forsaken.

"I sought the living no more. The generation had passed away with whom I had witnessed those days of horror. I saw another and a second and a third flourish and die away. A change gradually occurred which I had long anticipated with alarm: the whole appearance of the country became altered: a few only of the castles and churches of my time now remained, and only a few mountain oaks, which had struck their roots into their rocky soil, seemed to gather duration from that source, and to defy the power of time. I lived with them, with the earth, and with the stars, which, like myself, remained ever unchangeable and fixed. I learnt their varied course in the heavens, and the relation of the earth to their return; the nature of the clouds and the air; and, as he who has often observed the course of the seasons, knows that when the germs appear the leaves will soon follow, can tell the duration of the foliage and the period when it shall fade and die away — so I learnt, from watching the many generations of mankind whom I had seen pass away before me, the probable duration of each individual's springtime of life, and was enabled to prophesy the period of its gradual fading away and final term of existence.

"The castle remained uninhabited for more than a century; it was then threatened by the same ruin which had removed those of its preceding rulers. Walls were pulled down; the halls and chambers which I had inhabited were destroyed; my tower alone remained unmolested. Fresh buildings now rose from the ruins, the new halls and apartments were lighter and more lofty. In the

great room, in which Lord Markwart and myself had entertained so many noble guests in our time, were placed our portraits, those of my children and grandchildren, and all those loved ones of former days, together with a collection of others born subsequently, to me unknown personally, yet the sight of whom still filled me with pleasure, for each of those countenances, however diversified, bore some feature of resemblance to our family.

"From contemplating these portraits I felt an ardent desire to see the individuals themselves, and this impulse bore me to them. I found my family divided into several branches. I knew not the names of the countries, towns, or castles in which my descendants lived. Their dress and furniture were strange and foreign to me, and it was only here and there that, on a coat of arms, I met with traces of our family; their very language was no longer that of my own time. They regarded the names of those who, to my recent sense of grief, seemed but lately lost, as names appertaining to history of by-gone days. My own fate was to them a doubtful tradition of ancient times; but still their features, their voices were ours, whilst their appearance often reminded me of those whom I had so dearly loved.

"On the completion of the new building, its occupiers, a father and son, took possession of it. As I entered the church again, shortly after their arrival, I missed my presents on the altar—Lord Markwart's cuirass, and the cup and golden bracelet. The hope which I indulged, that my descendants had removed them to the castle, and had thus indicated a desire to regard me with kindness and sympathy, inspired me with a strong interest in their welfare, and to none of my posterity had I ever felt so greatly attracted as to them. When I looked on the father's sad and melancholy countenance, I felt that it resembled my own when mourning for my lord; and when I saw that he never smiled except at the sight of his son, and that he longed to be released as I did, and when in the son I saw my child, my Przibislawa, revive again—O! then with what confidence did I hope and expect that my deliverance was at hand!

"One day, at the foot of my tower, where it was seldom that any one came, I heard hasty footsteps approach—a cry of anguish from the father calling for his son—the lamentations of the ser-

vants from mouth to mouth, that their young lord had fallen into the river—that he was lost, and that their utmost speed to save him would be too late.

"Borne by the same mysterious impulse, in a moment I was in the midst of the stream, close to the sinking boy. I caught him up, and reached the bank with him in my arms. O! moment of happiness, which compensated for centuries of suffering! It was my own offspring who lay on my bosom—the child whom I had saved—and thus had I, alas! once embraced the child I had destroyed! His eyes were closed, his cheek was pale, yet his heart still beat, and he lived! And now, O! now how did I hope that he would open his eyes, again breathe, and waft me by a blessed smile to my husband, to Przibislawa!

"He was in a deep swoon: in vain did I breathe upon his lips; they remained without motion; he could not return to life without assistance.

"His father appeared at this moment, to my great relief. He saw his son saved, saw him in my arms, yet he ventured not to approach me. The servants stood trembling at a distance, and I beckoned to them in vain. Weaker and weaker beat the poor boy's heart under my hand. O! vain hope of the bliss of death! I was compelled to banish it from my heart. I kissed the lifeless child, I laid it safely on the grass, and vanished.

"Once again I saw the child and its father in the church. The entrance to our family vault was walled up, and in a shrine before it was placed a picture depicting a portion of my history. For the explanation of that picture I have penned the above narrative, and deposited it in faithful hands, in the hope, that one of my children who knows me and my fate, may overcome his dread of the condemned one, may voluntarily come to me, clasp me to his heart, and bestow on me that blissful and joyous death which may free my soul from the burden of the body, and unite me with my children and my lord!"

Chap. XVI.

The Manuscript of Centuries concluded. — Bertha.

Bertha laid down the pages amid contending feelings of sincere sympathy, high indignation at the pusillanimity of Lord Gescheck, ardent desire to seek the Matron, in order to give her the happy meeting with one of her children—a meeting she had for ages longed for in vain. Happily she might, although not directly a born daughter of the family, promote her re-union with her fondly-loved lord and husband, and thus terminate her state of suffering. These thoughts crowded upon her mind, but there came over her a feeling of horror when she more closely contemplated her meeting the White Lady in the tower. She, however, tried for the moment to banish these perplexing emotions, whilst she read the conclusion to the manuscript:

"Another change, and yet another, in rapid succession, have passed over my castle and its vicinity. Time removes all but *me:* my tower abides, and with it its contents and myself. When a new offspring is born, when one of the family is married, or when the hour comes for the living to quit this earth, then the same mystic impulse leads me to rejoice in the newly-bestowed one, to pronounce a blessing on the wedded pair, or take a long farewell of the beloved features that I am deprived of seeing on earth, and cannot behold in heaven. *This* I know—that deliverance is appointed for me, that it will come from my children; I know that death is reserved for me, and that the joys of death will be mine at last!"

Bertha was well aware where she was to seek for the Matron. Of the ancient portion of the castle there now remained only that fallen tower which adjoined the deserted court, where Otho had seen the White Lady the last evening of his life; and near to it, a second, in a very ruined condition, to the upper story of which the last of the rooms inhabited by her son opened. There was no means of access to either of these towers from without. The en-

trance from that room into the dilapidated tower inhabited by the Matron must be sought through some underground communication between that and the fallen tower. But it was not without a shuddering feeling of horror that Bertha could resolve on seeking it: even should she succeed, the thought of finding herself there, far from all human aid, of being alone and shut up with the White Lady in her chamber, there to look upon her death-like features—worn by a thousand years—to touch her, to hear the whisperings of her chilling breath, to see her die, and be alone with her corpse—this scene of horror could not but turn her brain with terror, or snatch her from her son by some dreadful death. She, therefore, determined to wait until some sign of further import should, by its summons, induce her to decide upon venturing to the tower.

Nothing, however, that could be considered as such an indication ensued; still she found it impossible to avoid dwelling upon the subject. The thought of the Matron, while she delayed her visit from hour to hour, looking in vain for her wished-for deliverance from the burden of life which had oppressed her for nearly a thousand years, allowed her no rest. She reflected, moreover, that all probability and even possibility of release for her, would be for ever lost if she did not venture to make the attempt, for, to which of her descendants could it be so facilitated by a knowledge of the circumstances and consequent fitting preparation of mind as to her? Every thought of her Otho, every feeling of joy afforded by her now blooming child, impelled her to take this step. The very absence of any further summons, implying as it did confidence in her resolution; the non-appearance of the Matron herself, who could at will, and at any moment stand before her, and implore her to grant this boon, but who doubtless kept away in order to spare her feelings: all served to strengthen her determination.

One morning, when nature, radiant with sun and life, seemed to banish all that was sad and gloomy from the earth, she clasped her child to her beating heart, kissed him with tears of devotion and anxiety, confided him in God's name to the attendant, and prepared at once to seek the Matron, however the consequences might affect herself or her son.

She would not allow any one of her servants to accompany her; but she chose the grandson of old Francis, whose forefathers had

so truly and honourably preserved the manuscript which had inspired her with this resolution, and she bade him carry a torch before her along the subterraneous passages, to assist her in opening the doors.

Chap. XVII.

The Ruined Tower.

Leading the boy by the hand, Bertha entered the first of those empty chambers which lay beyond that of her son, opening on the corridor that ran along that wing, at the window of which she had seen the White Lady on the Christmas eve, as she returned from the church after the baptism of her child. Her eye encountered nothing on either side as she proceeded; the whole of the vacant and neglected suite of rooms renewed the same impression of loneliness as when she visited them before. All was silent, even as death itself, interrupted only by the audible pulsation of her own heart. Her trial, her struggle was indeed severe; on the one hand, the thought of her son held her partly back, in order to remain with the living, and on the other, the recollection of her beloved husband in connection with the Matron urged her forward, while the peaceful, happy influence of pious feelings reconciled both desires, and her heart swelled with resolution and courage.

She had now reached the chamber, the first floor of which was on a level with the top of the dilapidated tower; and on the opposite side she perceived a narrow door, which, from its situation, led she knew not whither. Bertha inwardly shuddered at the sight; yet with firm hand she applied to it various keys out of her branch. At length one of these opened the lock, and agitated by a feeling of dread, not unmixed with joy, she saw a flight of steps, winding narrow and steep into the depths below. She lighted the torch, gave it to the boy, and descended almost overpowered with indiscribable awe, yet sustained by the unshaken resolution of her soul.

The steps did not descend very deep; they led into a circular vaulted chamber, from which a roomy subterraneous passage pro-

ceeded sideways. The air was similar to that of a cellar, yet sufficiently free for Bertha to breathe without difficulty; the flames of the torch flashed brightly among those dark shades which had remained undisturbed for centuries. Along the walls, at a moderate height, were small niches with seats; in the centre of each arch of these niches appeared a flower hewn in the sandstone, and a large lily occupied the chapiter above of the vaulted roof itself: all was mute and gloomy as the grave itself throughout the vault and the passage; all bore the impress of high antiquity, yet there was little or no sign of decay, and with every step she took, she felt as if quitting and leaving behind her the living and the present world, and approaching more and more the past.

The passage again terminated in a round vault exactly similar to the former, and she saw before her, by the light of the torch, a flight of steps leading upwards, like those she had descended. The throbbing of her heart redoubled at this sight. She bade the boy wait for her and to keep the torch burning. "If she did not return," she said, "by the time it had burnt down as far as the sign which she now marked with her finger, he was not to follow her, but to return to the castle by the same way they had come, to collect together the servants, conduct them hither, and all were to follow her course up the steps."

The boy looked anxiously at her; she encouraged and cheered him by a few words, and then ascended the steps. The light of the torch shone on her from below, and a ray of daylight burst upon her from a window above as she advanced, as a reviving beam of life. Still the most profound silence prevailed around. A small vaulted door-way, and a curiously carved black door with a bright ring, presented themselves opposite the window on the stone landing-place. Bertha grasped the ring, turned it, the door flew open, and revealed an apartment, the floor of which was covered with variegated tapestry and with a vaulted ceiling consisting of many arches. She looked around, it was quite empty; an unknown and monotonous sound struck upon her ear, which came no nearer, yet never ceased. It proceeded from a corner of the room, in which was seen a second door that stood only half open; Bertha's limbs trembled at this sight; but the weaker her powers of body became, the stronger grew the courage of her soul. Collecting herself, she

advanced, opened the door with a firm hand—when behold, in the chamber which she had now entered, was seated on a throne-like chair, the White Lady! Her seat formed the centre of others, similarly placed, but of course unoccupied. She was attired as Bertha had seen her before, and as she was depicted in the more modern painting in the white saloon, only that her face was almost concealed by the veil-like drapery which was wound around her head.

Bertha's feelings at the sight of the Matron, on entering the apartment, partook much more of joy than of fear. *That* had happened which *was* to happen; the moment had arrived, and must pass away in its turn, having brought with it its event, as destined to it from all eternity. She looked at the White Lady, and saw her sitting with a resignation, a repose, and a dignity of demeanour which made her forget and banish all cause for terror.

A like air of repose prevailed throughout the entire apartment. Hangings of tapestry, of dark purple hue, each of which bore the arms of the house of R——, worked in gold, covered the walls behind each throne, from the ceiling to the ground. On each side of the door of entrance stood a chest of ebony, inlaid with pearls and precious stones, similar in workmanship to the box or casket in which Bertha had found the manuscript. Two splendid and complete suits of armour hung in all their pride over these; in their front was suspended to each the sword that belonged to it; and opposite to these bright and noble trophies of antiquity, the oriel window admitted a view of the calm and lovely landscape without, the ever present beauties of nature. On a table stood a clepsydra or water-clock of ancient make—the course of time, as it passed drop by drop, alone being heard in this silent, lonesome abode.

Chap. XVIII.

Completion.

The Matron did not rise from her throne when Bertha entered, but turned her head towards the gentle visitor, raised her veil, and greeted her by a look so full of inexpressible delight, affection, and mildness, that it seemed to counteract the painful effort produced upon her features, the character of which was wholly those of a corpse, and on which time appeared to have repeatedly worked the destruction of its own performance, so as to efface every vestige of the original countenance. "And wilt thou indeed not shudder to approach—to touch me?" breathed her faint and hollow voice to her young and beautiful relation.

Giving way to the emotions excited by this appeal so moving to her heart, Bertha rushed towards her and sank upon her knees before her. She had lost all self-possession, and completely forgotten all motive save the one dear wish and eager desire to call that Matron—mother.

Her Ancestress looked down upon her with her star-like eyes. "I knew it would be thus," she said, after a few moments of silence; "my joy is now becoming that of Heaven!"

Bertha embraced her with deep and filial affection. "Thee, first of my living children, shall I welcome as my own in Heaven!" whispered the White Lady, bending over her. Bertha at this moment felt a light, unearthly breathing on her forehead; she raised her eyes in search of the Matron—she had vanished from her arms—she beheld not her death. Bertha remained on her knees, unable to rise, in silent, tearful prayers of gratitude.

Becoming now gradually more calm, she rose and seated herself

on one of the ancient chairs, and thought of all that had passed, deeply thankful for having been allowed to succeed in accomplishing what she had so much wished. She felt as if placed nearer to Otho by this act, and as if united more closely with him by this new tie of kindred. Her fancy carried her to his abode among the blessed, where the Lady Juditha was now meeting her long-lost husband; where her children were pressing around her, inexpressibly grateful for her affection, and eager to repair the injustice they had unknowingly done her on earth; and how would her heart overflow with the joy of maternal love, and of pardon, and the bliss of souls redeemed!

The golden daylight seemed to beam with fresh splendour, the breeze around poured forth with a happier sound, nature appeared with silent sympathy to celebrate the happiness of one of her creatures. Bertha remained sitting, lost in thought; she had forgotten time and present objects.

At length hasty footsteps resounded near the tower, the door flew open, in rushed the weeping boy, and a train of servants, followed by the nurse with little Otho. Loud and universal were their exclamations of joy at finding their mistress safe and unhurt, whilst the nurse related that the White Lady had an hour before stood near the child's cradle and blessed it. Bertha now followed her attendants out of the tower, the entrance to which she carefully closed.

After some days, she ordered the family vault to be opened; she felt desirous to see the Matron once more. She entered the chapel. There reposed the aged, who had been released from life by gradual decay, and near them those whom sickness or a violent death had prematurely snatched away in early life.

Various symbols, the garland of the bride, the sword of the warrior, the veil of the widow, indicated the opposite fates of those who, at the same time, were united by a common name, a common home when alive, and a common asylum in their last repose.

Bertha caused the lid of the Matron's coffin to be removed, and gazing upon her beheld the same countenance she had seen so shortly previous, with the same happy, blessed smile. She stood absorbed in reflection, imagining the moment when she had lain down in the coffin, and had yielded herself up to the dear enjoyment of her long sought-for repose.

The vault was now ordered to be walled up again. The Lady Bertha removed from the ancient chamber to her own the picture of the White Lady—who since that time has been seen no more.

Printed by Joseph Rogerson, 24, Norfolk-street, Strand, London.

p. 51.

Sophie Ariele, or the Physician of Marseilles.

The

Physician of Marseilles,

The Revolutionists,

etc.

Four Tales from the German

of

The Baroness de la Motte Fouqué.

MDCCCXLV.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY LEVEY, ROBSON, AND FRANKLYN,
Great New Street, Fetter Lane.

RER
Jantz
F788
no. 2

Contents.

I. SOPHIE ARIELE, OR THE PHYSICIAN OF MARSEILLES.

II. CHRISTMAS EVE.

III. THE REVOLUTIONISTS.

IV. VALERIE.

Sophie Ariele;

OR,

THE PHYSICIAN OF MARSEILLES.

Chapter I.

ITH his books and instruments—and various chemical preparations, which could only have been explained by a few of the most learned in pharmacology—around him, sat Doctor Matthew, a famous physician of Marseilles. It was believed that he and his friend Farenberg lived in the closest spiritual connexion with each other; a constant correspondence on all subjects was kept up between them; sometimes indeed was this intercourse so astonishingly swift, that one might have almost fancied invisible messengers flew from Stockholm to Marseilles, with Faren-

berg's letters to Doctor Matthew, and as quickly carried back Doctor Matthew's answers to Stockholm.

When such tales as these came to his ears, Doctor Matthew would laugh heartily, and explain the extraordinary speed of their correspondence by an exact calculation of the post, which from time to time passed between him and his friend; or, if his hearers were not convinced by this, he would conclude by telling them, between jest and earnest, of a pigeon post which hastened beyond belief his intercourse with the Swedish sage; and it was not to be denied that the most beautiful pigeon through all the beautiful south of France might be seen flying in and out of Doctor Matthew's pleasant farm, which lay in the suburbs of Marseilles.

On the evening of the day on which this history begins, the learned Doctor Matthew sat alone, and seemed to have no thought but for his grave and deeply mysterious studies; even the thunder of an approaching storm, which gradually grew louder and louder, could not wake him from the reverie in which the circles, squares, and triangles, lying on the paper before him, held him, as it were, fast bound.

Nevertheless, as if this thought too formed part of his reverie, he sighed almost inaudibly, "Sophie Ariele;" and then added, smiling, or indeed almost laughing, "When I am fortunate—or, I should say, unfortunate—she comes, just at the end, and scatters all my labour to the winds; and then I have measured and calculated in vain."

In the mean time, however, he did not suffer these doubts to prevent him from diligently pursuing his work, and he looked up as though he were disagreeably disturbed, when a servant announced the arrival of a stranger, who had come to ask his medical advice. But before the message was ended every symptom of dissatisfaction that had appeared on the good man's face was checked, and his grave, noble countenance changed to an expression of cheerful kindness as he beckoned to the servant to conduct the stranger to his presence.

The tall figure of a man in a military dress, of noble bearing and youthful appearance, entered the room; and Doctor Matthew said, after the first salutations were over—"I have the honour, if I am

not mistaken, to welcome in you a Swedish officer, arrived here, as I suppose, by the advice of my friend Farenberg, of Stockholm."

"It is so, sir," returned the stranger; "I am the Swedish colonel, Gustavus Gyllenskiold, whom your friend Farenberg has sent hither, in the hope of deriving from you that assistance which the profound nature of his studies will not suffer him to confer on me immediately.

Doctor Matthew looked for some time upon his guest in thoughtful silence; at length he said, "The proposal is difficult; it sounds almost as though it were sent as a temptation. Shall I be able to render assistance where my friend has failed? And besides, your appearance, sir, gives evidence of the most blooming health. What cure is it that you require? If your truth-telling eyes and noble courtesy did not forbid the suspicion, I should say you had come here to insult me by a pretence of illness."

An expression of indignation, that he seemed to restrain with difficulty, passed over the countenance of the young stranger. The doctor good-naturedly extended his hand to him, with these words, "I would not have said so much, had I for a moment fancied it would really have affected you. My noble guest, there is only one singular little 'if' in the way; but, come, in all truth I will not grant a place in my heart for any such 'ifs' as these."

Gustavus Gyllenskiold seized the hand so kindly proffered, and the doctor added, "In what can I help you, sir? I am ready with joy to do it, to the utmost in my power. Your malady is, I doubt not, of the greatest moment; for, however many fanciful sick people may be found in the world, it is not possible for a man like yourself to suffer under the influence of unsubstantial dreams."

Then the young stranger slowly drew his hand from that of the physician, and said, shaking his head, "If you are one of those, sir, who consider dreams to be of no importance, either for good or evil, I must not reckon upon your assistance; for my malady consists entirely in evil dreams. Waking, I am healthy and well; but slumber seldom sinks upon my eyes without bringing with it the most ghastly visions, which disturb and terrify my soul. Yet, I pray you to forgive the dreamer, who has robbed you of so much of your precious time, and who can flatter himself with no hope

that you will enter into his case, or in the least participate with and help him in his sufferings. Farewell."

But Doctor Matthew, with engaging cordiality, begged his singular guest to remain, telling him that, if he could not reckon upon his assistance, he might with confidence expect his sympathy, which indeed had been already assured to him by their mutual friend, Farenberg. "Indeed, it is incomprehensible to me," he added, as Gyllenskiold cheerfully yielded to his request, "how the philosopher, who is in general so seldom wrong, should send you to me under these circumstances; for our ideas concerning dreams are the only point at variance between us in our scientific path. For though, like him, I acknowledge many deep mysteries in nature, and look upon them both with reverence and awe, yet dreams are mysteries which I can only attribute to a physical cause; while our friend believes, not only that physical breath is often imparted to them, but that if they are not indeed to be exalted to the nature of heavenly apparitions, they are at least messengers in spiritual communications. It is possible, certainly, that he may have suddenly and completely changed his views, and has sent you to me that I may put you in the way to recovery by a different method from that formerly adopted by himself."

"Of that I have much doubt," returned Gyllenskiold. "His injunctions respecting you were wrapped in that mystery which often accompanies his words; and I should fancy, from what you now say, that I had deceived myself by a misunderstanding, if this billet in his handwriting did not prove to us both that he has sent me to you, at Marseilles."

"Unaccountable," said the physician, after some consideration, while from the well-known characters he read over and over again the words, and at last almost spelt them: "'*Cure for friend Gyllenskiold from his evil dreams, by friend Matthew at Marseilles.*' Unaccountable!" he repeated, musing as before; "for, if my vanity induced me to believe that Farenberg had yielded to my opinion, a moment's reflection reminds me that long after your departure from Stockholm, very long after (for the posts, when properly managed, pass and repass inconceivably faster than travellers), I received a letter from him, confirming his full belief in the mystery of dreams, and promising me a fresh demonstration of the

truth of his way of thinking. And I cannot doubt, Colonel, that in alluding to this fresh instance of his theory, he spoke of you. But the principal thing now to be considered is your health. And it seems certain, at any rate, that in your particular case our friend placed some dependence upon my art for the treatment of these sort of maladies; I pray you, therefore, shew me the same confidence, and give me a clear description of your malady, and the way it came first upon you."

Chapter II.

Gyllenskiold sat down in an arm-chair, near the physician's table, and said, after sorrowfully musing for a long time—

"How my malady first came upon me? Alas! dear sir, from the very hour that I was born. It is at any rate probable that, in the very first dreams of my childhood, the same ghastly cloud-spirit which still follows me was on the watch. Those who were then around me say, that, when an infant, I often awoke from slumber with fearful screams, and that at other times I smiled in my sleep like an angel." And, indeed, at these words sweet smiles, like those of an angel, passed over his proud features; yet soon a dark cloud of sorrow again overspread his countenance, and he said—"Whether this was pity or flattery, or a self-deception, or whether it was indeed a truth which has passed away with the happy Paradise of childhood, I know not: now—"

He stopped, and sang softly to the moving tones of an old song—

"Now is it far otherwise!"

Then he held his hand before his eyes, while he leant his elbow upon the arm of the chair, and the Doctor thought he could see soft tears stealing down the cheeks of his strange guest. But, as the physician wished on no account to disturb this fit of gentle melancholy, he avoided observing him too closely.

Suddenly Gustavus Gyllenskiold looked up proudly and steadily, and casting a piercing glance upon the physician, he said—"I am

certain you will not think so meanly of me as to believe that dreams alone, be their images ever so evil, could have power to drive me to that state of melancholy depression into which I felt myself sunk a moment ago; but I think if my mother had died earlier, if I had never seen her glad, heavenly smiles, when I awoke to the morning sun out of dreamless, or even sweetly dreaming sleep; or, if I had never heard her happy, hopeful words, when she said how, in time to come, she would prepare for the marriage festival of her Gustavus, or would salute him when he returned home from the field of battle as a victorious hero, or from some distant country as a noble ambassador."

Again he was silent for a few moments, and it seemed as though, with his dark glowing blue eyes, he looked sorrowfully down into the depths of his own soul; then he said, quite collected, and in almost as indifferent a tone as though he were speaking of the unfavourable circumstances of some other person—

"In this case, sir, those fearful dreams might not have come, nor the still more fearful awaking; for, at the *end*, when a heart of any worth becomes recognised in a half a quarter of an hour—when people *do* find a little time for sensibility, though five minutes after they have forgotten, perhaps, everything about it—Ah! well; the way of the world is still the way of the world; and just contrariwise, also, a heart is still a heart. It is a painful history, too, that of the heart; but, after a man has paid a few apprentice-fees to Sorrow, he gets to understand its course, and becomes reconciled to it. Just so it is, also, when Glory smiles sweetly and temptingly upon us, like an amorous wanton, and in those smiles lies hidden the promise—'Now I greet thee! now I kiss thee! Now art thou mine! now am I thine!' And neither greeting nor kiss follows, and the promise of the glorious union only becomes a swelling poison in the veins! Yes, yes; the man who possesses a really superior soul submits to all this, and thinks at last—'Let me only be laid in the grave, and beautiful golden characters be set upon my coffin or my tomb, and the long-estranged lover will then all at once become faithful, and turn and abandon my sepulchre no more; but she will gaze, with looks of infinite tenderness, upon the breathless corpse of him

whom, in life, she dragged—by her deceitful, enticing, changeful features—through a bewildering labyrinth of error!' And can any, from a prince to a slave, long hope for any better consolation than this, before he is shut up in his silent, narrow cabin, within six black boards, bedizened, it may be, with a few golden nails or painted characters? It were pretty much the same, indeed, whether one had performed the deeds they commemorate or not; and the shadowy forms of our great forefathers might shake their long-bearded heads at pleasure. But when one thinks how the sweet, proud hopes of a lovely mother for our worldly career have been deceived—how it is nought but sorrow, notwithstanding, which has taken possession of our heart—yes, then one might—"

He stood up full of excitement, as if suddenly a cloud-spirit had appeared to combat with him; then sitting calmly down again upon his arm-chair, he said, smiling and making a gentle movement with his hand, to prevent the soothing answer of the physician, "Let them alone, good sir, I have comfort for such griefs as these; I know indeed that *life* is only *death*. And why should the so-called *life* so especially concern us? Have we not equally to do with the so-called *death?* The last is indeed only the culminating point of the first. It is not so much for the sake of a peaceful life as of a peaceful death that I ask for your advice in the name of your friend Farenberg. The experiment with most men is long in being made, and," added he, in a low voice, "I suppose that few would wish it shortened. I am still young, dear sir; render therefore my lingering death as gentle as possible, while you scare away or lighten the fearful dreams of my life."

"And these dreams," asked the physician, who had listened eagerly, "do they always appear to you in the same form? or do they alter, according to the different dispositions of your soul?"

Gustavus answered with a smile, "He who could thus account for the various dispositions of his soul, and from their echoing tones know how to watch for the beings of the visible or invisible world, would scarcely need to ask advice of any; he would himself be able to write the prescription for his cure, or, it may be, the reason why it is incurable, for indeed the die is even."

"Hearken!" said Doctor Matthew, somewhat harshly. "My noble profession is no game at dice; and if it has any unworthy

members who consider it as such, I am not, God be thanked! one of the number. But I know that, without the entire confidence of the patient, no physician in the world can do any good. Unquestionably, sir, you have discovered something in my appearance that has deprived me thus soon of your confidence; for it seems you avoid unfolding to me the mystery of your dreams; and therefore, for my part, I can only grieve that you have taken the long journey from Stockholm to Marseilles in vain."

Gustavus Gyllenskiold rose from his seat with ill-repressed anger, and stood in the act of taking a cold, but courteous farewell. Then the door gently opened, and the graceful form of a lady with a white dove on her arm, herself as tender and as snowy white as her dove, floated in. At the unexpected sight of the stranger, a soft blush overspread her pale cheek: with unspeakable grace she bent down over the physician, and whispered a few words in his ear, then in a moment disappeared through the open door. The soothing magic that the presence of woman sheds over the too sorrowful heart of man, swelled sweetly and tenderly through the soul of the young soldier; he already laid down again the hat that he had taken up for his departure, and said in an altered voice, "Dear sir, a little while ago I declared, in a moment of anger, that I would renounce your assistance; and now, in just such a fit of anger, you withdraw your assistance from me. We have both been unjust towards each other; but let me say one thing, should not the physician have more indulgence with the patient, than the patient with the physician? And indeed the happy ought to show far more gentleness to the unhappy, than the unhappy can be expected to towards the happy."

Deeply touched, Doctor Matthew took the noble youth in his arms, and Gustavus said, "Now you have indeed unlocked my heart, and I will willingly confide to you what I myself know of my dreams."

Mutual confidence being thus restored, they both returned to their seats, and Gyllenskiold related the following history.

Chapter III.

"Even when a boy I was pursued by dreams. Tiny forms played around me: they were infinitely smaller than I was myself at that time; yet even their dwarfish size excited in me a most peculiar dread—more horrible, perhaps, than if now a monster, gigantic as the tower of yon cathedral, were to offer me combat hand to hand. Then at any rate it would be quickly decided, and in no wise an inglorious contest. But to be struck dead by mites, by ants! and it was thus that the visions of my dreams appeared before me. Little men, only a finger long, with sharp needles for swords, fiercely enraged one against the other, and all together against the world, but particularly against me. How often, when my tender mother laid me in my bed, and saw my infant limbs tremble, or my cheeks grow pale, how often did she say, 'Oh, Gustavus—my own child!—what ails thee? Let me only know what gives thee pain, and surely, with God's assistance, I would chase it from thy dear, tender soul!' But it seemed to me then that my lips were sealed; I did nothing but sigh deeply in my heart, and think—'Ah, if you only knew about the wicked little wizards! But what then? They would not be so obedient to you as your poor Gustavus, and you would not be able to preserve him from them. Much better is it therefore that you should know and understand nothing at all about them?'—So I kept the secret from my dear mother until she died; when even then I strove to tell her of it in my childish lamentations, the little wizards disappeared, and I thought that perhaps their evil forms would come more seldom. But it turned out far otherwise; they came only more often, and wore a more fearful appearance than ever. By little and little, out of the dark world of dreams, forms rose up"—

He stopped, and, with his eyes half closed, mused for a long time, shuddering as if he could find no words to express the horror in his bosom. At last he continued in a hoarse voice, speaking almost like a frenzied man—"Doctor Matthew, have you ever read the 'Germania' of Tacitus? But what do I say? so learned a man, and not acquainted with the 'Germania' of Tacitus! Well,

you must have read there—'There shall arise at various times from the waves of the north-eastern ocean strange, brilliant forms —beautiful, but absolutely fearful on account of their marvellously solemn beauty!' *That* was the idea, at least, which always came to my mind when I read that enigmatical passage. And when, as a schoolboy, I had to explain the description of it, I was blamed because I put my own fearful meaning upon it; yet it seemed to me that I could have explained my dreams, as they increased upon me, in the enigmatical words of the old Roman. Even to you, dear sir, I can scarcely describe them more clearly.—Will you have patience with me?"

The physician begged he would desist from the explanation that seemed so singularly painful to him, and to wait for some more favourable moment. But Gyllenskiold quickly composed himself, and said with a forced smile, "He would indeed be a brave soldier who must wait for the right hour before he can face the enemy! No, forwards! From the misty world of dreams there arise kings' heads with long grey beards, and maidens with such wondrously bright forms, that my closed eyes are often pained at their exceeding brightness. These might be called beautiful; but such a strange expression of scorn plays around their sharply curved coral lips, and their eyes sparkle sometimes with such triumphant hatred, that a deep, inexpressible horror fills my whole soul. And then they sing so wildly and fearfully; and it seems, ever and anon, as though I understand their words, and yet I understand them not; while, from musing perpetually on the meaning, which at one time seems plain, and at another eludes my grasp, my brain becomes perfectly dizzy. The old crowned heroes shake their white heads disapprovingly, as though in anger; and the women grow pale, as if with fear, and distort their livid, hideous features; and then all of a sudden they are changed to the white crowned heads, and the old heroes to the horrible blooming women. Then they all quarrel, and pursue each other with mad eagerness; then arise such wild dancing and chasing, and at last they fall to the earth, misshapen, disfigured corpses; and all around, in the air, is heard a most fearful chorus—'*Life is death!*'—and involuntarily I sing with them, and my own voice swells with the dull sounds of the dream, louder and louder, till at

last, terrified, I awake; but the ghastly sound pursues me: '*Life is death!*' and the earth seems to me dark and dead, and the light of the sun changes into a grey mist; and rejoicings and festivals are nought but sorrow for me, and the noon-day is changed into midnight."

Chapter IV.

Gustavus Gyllenskiold leaned back in the arm-chair, pale as a wounded soldier after a hard-fought battle.

Doctor Matthew looked at him thoughtfully, deeply pondering over what he had heard, and considering it according to the rules of his healing art; he turned one attentive look on Gyllenskiold, asked him a few hasty searching questions, then moved his chair to the table to write some prescriptions and receipts of a simple kind, but still more to think over and judge of what he had heard, and note down a general view of the state of the sufferer, and the changing expression of his face.

Meanwhile a soft slumber stole insensibly over the eyes and soul of the exhausted youth. But while he slept his wild fearful dreams rose not up before him. It seemed to him as though he stood upon the top of an exceeding high mountain, and had never before breathed or felt such pure, reanimating air. It poured through all his veins like a healing torrent, and overflowed his whole frame, when gently his heart ceased to beat, and a sweet voice sang:—

> "How beautiful is death,
> When in pure light we die!
> Not fearful is the parting breath,
> It is but sleep in which we lie:
> Death is not night,
> But pure and glorious light."

Wondering, he looked behind him to the place from whence the singing came, and near him he saw a white dove, that silently and sweetly looked on him with its thoughtful eyes.

"Do the doves sing upon the lofty mountains of the south?" he

asked. Then he heard a pleasant voice whisper, "No, not yet!" and a low, gentle laugh.

But this was no dream. He had awaked long ago; and looking up, he saw indeed the white dove, but upon the shoulder of the same fair, tender lady, whose lovely appearance had before checked the rising quarrel between him and the physician. She held in her white hand some sheets of paper, which she laughingly tore in pieces and let fly out of the window, amusing herself with watching the white fragments borne hither and thither by the evening wind, and then sinking down into the darkening surface of the neighbouring sea.

Doctor Matthew looked at her in astonishment; still holding the pen in his right hand. These little loose fragments were all that remained of the description he had just finished of Gyllenskiold's morbid world of dreams. The graceful vision murmured still more clearly, "No, not yet;" and she added, as she stooped down and kissed his brow, "but how could you undertake anything without consulting me?" Then, for the first time noticing that Gyllenskiold had awaked, with a swift step she glided out of the room.

Chapter V.

"A strange series of circumstances," said the physician, after some moments' pause, "compels me, Colonel Gyllenskiold, to let you have some deeper and earlier insight into the history of my life, than might seem advisable between prudent men on so short an acquaintance; but it will be no painful task to me to show this confidence to one of your noble and courteous demeanour. And, besides, we are already bound closely to each other by our mutual love and respect for the wise and learned Farenberg. Listen then, in order that you may not take me for a weak-hearted fool, who is ready every moment to sacrifice his views of life and skill to the caprices of a beautiful woman."

Gyllenskiold pressed the hand of the physician; grateful for his frank and noble confidence, and it seemed to him as though a sweetly sounding stream of air, like the murmuring of bees, breathed

through the apartment. Doctor Matthew also must have perceived it, for a smile of pleasure passed over his countenance, while he softly, almost imperceptibly, shook his head. Then he said—

"It is now almost six years ago since I made a botanical expedition over the chain of mountains which separate Genoa from the plains of Lombardy; and one beautiful spring evening, I found myself at so great a height that I was as it were quite alone in the world, and that everything around me had disappeared from view amid shapeless clouds. The mountain summit on which I stood rose up into the sunny blue air from the sea of mist at my feet, like some lonely island. Mountain herbs filled the air with the most delicious odour, and the most exquisite moss grew under my feet, giving me thus as sweet an enjoyment of nature as can be found in this wide, beautiful world. But every trace of the footpath had now disappeared, and half fearing, half smiling, I thought of the haughty physician, who, in a sumptuous feast, was placed by the jesting tyrant at a separate table, and entertained only with perfumes, that he might be satisfied with Olympic fare. While I was looking for a path by which I might easily descend, I beheld in the surface of the sea of mist my own reflection, pale, stiff, and distorted. Horror and giddiness seized me; I felt myself precipitated into some unknown abyss, and became insensible as I fell. When I again recovered my senses, I found myself in a shepherd's cottage stretched upon a soft bed of moss. In my head and breast I felt severe pain; but, notwithstanding, an unspeakably sweet feeling, as of etherial balm, floated around me, and filled my whole soul. I believed that it was the sensation that followed a happy death, and thought a fair, tender woman's form at my side was an angel guiding me home. And oh, my friend! though since that wondrous moment I have led a happy and, in comparison with other men, a blissful life, and have seen, God be praised! manifold joys spring up before me on my earthly path, yet the glorious feeling of that moment sometimes makes me wish that it had been my last, and that I had been conducted, as I then believed, to the eternal joys of Paradise. But I again sank back into a gentle insensibility. When I recovered, the beautiful vision had disappeared. A grey-headed shepherd, with a benevolent countenance, stood by my bed, saying, 'Take comfort, my dear sir;

you will not die.' Knowledge and experience, however simply acquired, I never despised; but with my returning senses, awoke also within me a sort of medical pride, and I answered the good old man, 'Do you know that? and who has told you?' 'The lady Ariele herself' he said, in a tone of confidence, that seemed to put every doubt of recovery out of the question; and so indeed did it seem to me. 'The lady Ariele herself?' I repeated, as if responding to his words. 'Yes—yes!' And in my heart I knew full well that she was the same fair vision that I had thought an angel, and whom my fevered brain had since represented as a being endowed with a mysterious irresistible influence, whose presence alone could infuse healing power into the expiring breath of man."

"Something like the purest and most refreshing breeze?" asked Gyllenskiold.

The physician answered, with some astonishment and confusion, "Exactly. But what led you to think of that strange comparison?"

"Only," returned the other, "as we often hit upon certain thoughts without being able to give any exact account of their origin. It came to me from the dark, sweet, inexplicable sympathy of our common nature."

"Very true," said Doctor Matthew, with an expression of perfect satisfaction, "very true; and I now feel a greater pleasure in disclosing to you the progress of my strangely happy fortunes.

"The lady Ariele lived, as I learned on the recovery of my health, in almost solitary seclusion, in the restored ruins of an old castle, which had once belonged to the noble race of Belmont. The air around this castle was very pure and delightful, but of so singular a quality that only a few of the beautiful lady's servants and attendants could stay there for a long time together; and while those around her were obliged to leave the place, the lady herself bloomed in as perfect health as they who lived in the regions lower down in the valley. Yet attendants never failed her. Not that they considered it any sacrifice, and did it for the sake of charity; but there was a peculiar charm, and a silent, delightful authority in her whole life and nature, wonderfully united to an almost childish gaiety, which chained every heart to her presence; and the domestics who had left her, always returned to the castle, earnestly praying to be admitted afresh into her service. By these changes in her

household, the fame of Sophie Ariele's gentleness and goodness spread further and further through the country. And she herself often descended, like a protecting angel, to heal the sick, to cherish the wounded, and by her sweet presence to carry peace wherever discord or anger were kindled between any of the inhabitants of the deep valleys. And an instance was never known in which she had failed to reconcile them; no sick man, whose restoration she had attempted, remained unhealed. And perhaps she might have been honoured in those valleys as a saint, only that her joyousness, which sometimes burst out into laughing merriment, forbade those exceedingly solemn thoughts.

"By the gracious care of this beautiful physician I was soon so completely cured that I was able to pay a visit of thanks to her lofty castle. It is true that I felt my art as a physician to have been completely superseded, for I must acknowledge that when I became better, and endeavoured narrowly to observe Sophie's method of cure, her medicines and restoratives were for the most part quite unknown to me, or seemed completely unimportant and almost childish. Yet I knew, from experience, that I could never have restored a person so severely wounded, in the short time that Sophie had required to complete my cure.

"Light as a chamois, and happy as a lark in spring, I climbed the mountain path to Ariele's castle, in order to thank my mysterious preserver. You ask what I found there? Spare me, my friend, the task of describing the capricious strangeness of this almost aëriel dwelling; or—for I feel that you would wish to know more concerning it—spare me at least at present. At another time our conversations may lead us back to this subject, when I will gratify your curiosity. Sophie was not, as I had at first supposed, one of those strange learned Italians who had obtained a degree in medicine for their skill and knowledge. No one was further than Sophie Ariele from possessing academic knowledge. But her mind is tuned in such sweet and innocently deep accord with all things with which she is acquainted, as it were without art or learning, that she floats above all my science like a glittering breath of air playing upon the waves and circles of the sea. It is true she acknowledges that justice and goodness are often to be found in my manner of thinking and acting; but it frequently happens, as it did just now, that she

laughs at my prescriptions and receipts, or whatever notes of the kind I have prepared—tears them to pieces, as a child would a daisy, and gives them as a sport to the winds. But in all the various cases in which experience has taught me that my lovely wife possesses a true judgment, in its highest and noblest form, I have never met with one that appeared to me so singular as your own. Indeed, sir, I now hope, with the utmost confidence, to be able very soon to banish your fearful dreams; and to rejoice our friend Farenberg with a favourable account of the issue of your journey to Marseilles."

Chapter VI.

Doctor Matthew now invited his patient to their evening meal, that was awaiting them in the garden by the sea shore; and they went out together. More balmy than usual, after the thunder and lightning of a distant storm that had just passed away, the blossoms and flowers of the herbs breathed fragrance from the beds where they grew, partly in beautiful order, partly in capricious confusion, throughout the green plantation.

"It is Sophie's work," said the doctor, smiling, while Gyllenskiold with pleased astonishment followed him through the shaded walks which wound between the various trees, forming little bowers in the shrubberies as they passed along, and displaying every now and then to the view a transient prospect of the beautifully swelling sea.

The physician, with the sweet feelings that now breathed through his soul, beholding the grave smiles of Gustavus as a bright mirror of his own thoughts, softly said—

"One evening, as I stood upon the walls of Ariele's mountain castle, and looked with her at the setting of the evening sun, and the veil of mist which gradually sank over the deep valleys, the feeling at that sweet hour stole over my heart, that she indeed was the soul of my life; and a supplication for her pure love breathing from my lips was answered by a softly whispered yes. At this moment it seemed to me that upon these happy mountains my earthly

destiny was fulfilled. I spoke, as a matter of course, of the future that I was to spend henceforth in the distant castle. But she looked at me in astonishment, and a light shade of displeasure passed over her features, as on a bright summer day the shadow of a cloud sometimes passes over the flowery meadows. She chid me gently for intending, by this seclusion, to deprive my fellow-creatures of the advantage of those faculties which God had placed in my soul, and in the art I exercised. She would go with me, assisting me by the aid of that perception which had been granted her by nature, and which, until now, she had only been able to use for the assistance of a few families of shepherds. 'But,' added she, blushing, 'supported by the arm of a protecting husband, and by his name veiled from the vain, rude glances and praises of the world, I hope to do more good than I have ever before been able to accomplish, all to the glory of the invisible Creator, and the happiness of his dear creatures.' Full of delight, I gave myself up to Sophie's sweet direction, and begged of her to consider whether her tender frame could for a long continuance support an atmosphere less pure and clear than that she breathed in her mountain castle. 'Take me to a city by the sea,' she answered, after some consideration, 'to the south, to a city by the sea, that overlooks the waves of the sea—the holy, wonderful, living sea. The breezes blow there as undisturbed and refreshingly as upon the top of these lofty mountains.' To me, as a physician, this opinion of her health seemed true and reasonable. And for five years, now, I have lived a most happy husband, sometimes as her scholar, sometimes also—though it is true in but few cases—as an instructor to my beautiful Sophie Ariele."

"Sophie Ariele!" repeated Gyllenskiold, after a sweet, dream-like fit of musing, "Sophie Ariele! How graceful the name sounds! And is this beautiful creature, that almost seems wafted to you from heaven, without either friends or kindred? And is Ariele her second Christian name—or the name of her race?"

"On this subject," said the physician, with an open-hearted smile, "I can give you no other account than one which will seem to you almost childish. Sophie was separated from her parents, under peculiar circumstances, in her early childhood. All that she can recall of her relations carries with it the ideas connected with

her infancy, as it was only as a child that she remembers them. She laughs sometimes at her own history; yet more often, the tears drop from her blue, angelic eyes, when she recalls—though the remembrance is now only indistinct—the harsh and cruel separation. I entreat you, therefore, my noble guest, disturb not the serenity of that blue heaven by any allusion to Sophie Ariele's birth."

Blushing, from a slight feeling of displeasure, Gyllenskiold said—"I hope that I have not behaved to my noble host with such rude or uncourteous manners, that he could be justified in fearing from me an error against all rules of courtesy. Is it probable that at our first meeting I should inquire of a noble lady of her origin, and her early relations?"

"But let me hope," answered the physician soothingly, "that we shall see you often at our house; and it was only in consideration of this, that"—

"That you find it necessary to warn me against rudeness towards a noble lady," eagerly interrupted Gyllenskiold. "This caution, Doctor Matthew, was perfectly unnecessary, for I can assure you, on my word of honour, that the gentlemen of Sweden understand quite as well the courtesy that is due to noble ladies as the most chivalrous of the knights of France."

An indignant reply rose to the lips of the physician. But at that moment soft sounds murmured through the neighbouring trees, and he laid his fingers on his mouth, while Gustavus bent in a kind of embarrassed compliance, and an angel-voice sang the following words, to the soft, irregular accompaniment of the almost motionless, but gently murmuring chords:—

"Sweet evening breezes of the sea—
  Doubly sweet the thunder over—
From every flower, from every tree
  Woo its sweetness, like a lover.
Hide not yourselves in vale or glen,
  Or in earnest or in jest;
The storm is over: come again,
  Breathe on every meadow's breast.

"Spring laid her down awhile, and slept,
  And in her absence storms arose;
She has awaked—the flower that wept
  Has dried its tears, and fresher blows:

Life's perfect circle does not cease,
For all is safe, till clouds are over;
Strife unconscious turns to peace,
And life and joy are friends for ever."

Chapter VII.

Towards the north were dark, thick forests; towards the south the immeasurable ocean, extending free and boundless in the horizon, and blending in the already darkening evening hour with the rosy-tinted clouds of heaven. It seemed to Gyllenskiold's ravished senses as if the world was nearly dissolved into nothingness, and yet at the same time expanded into infinity. Half-shuddering, he looked out into the undefined distance, which appeared to him the type of his own uncertain future; so that for some minutes he forgot the presence of his noble host, and even of his beautiful hostess, softly sighing to himself, "Life is death! and the white sails upon the dark blue surface are my fearful dreams, sorrowfully waving to and fro betwixt sleeping and waking!"

But Sophie Ariele said joyfully, in an inexpressibly melodious voice, "Life is life; and the white sails upon the darkening waves are messengers of glorious promises, from a distant and infinitely more beautiful and blooming shore."

Gustavus Gyllenskiold, with sweet emotion, bowed low before her graceful form: it was as though a joyous blessing had descended upon his soul from above, chasing the shadow from every gloomy thought. It was only by a strong effort, and by the assistance of his natural and high-bred courtesy, that he could suddenly fall into the easy tone of common conversation, while he implored the mistress of the place to forgive his strange and most uncourteous wonder at the astonishing beauty of everything that surrounded him.

Sophie Ariele's beautiful head shook half-disapprovingly, as a little flower trembles on its stalk before the rough blast of evening. It was evident there was something not quite right in the words of the guest; yet with gentle compliance she continued in the same

tone in which Gyllenskiold had spoken. The three were soon sitting together, surrounded by dishes, glasses, and flowers, talking as carelessly and merrily as if they were in an elegant saloon at Paris. The words of a little French song came into Gyllenskiold's mind, which might, perhaps, be rendered—

"Unknown treasures, fairy pleasures,
Lavished on this world of ours;
Joys whose home we cannot trace,
Telling of some fairer place—
Sunny hours!
Graceful, laughing, light as air,
Sunny as the sunny weather—
Without a pain, without a care—
Jest and laughter blent together.

"Ask not why the violet blows—
Why the bloom is on the rose:
Joy will not be set to task;
Winged, light, she roameth free.
Too curious mortal, do not ask
What or whence thy bliss may be:
The sweetest bloom upon the rose
Lies deepest in its bosom's core;
Seek not its petals to unclose—
Bared to the world, its charm is o'er."

But as they thus merrily conversed together, there was suddenly heard the sound of full, rich, powerful chords, as from a solemn choir: the most exquisite harmony fell on the ear, while the melody was more felt than expressed. Gyllenskiold perceived that it proceeded from harps that were hidden in the trees. It was, indeed, the same sound that had before, with softer breathings, accompanied Ariele's song, which now, under the influence of the rising night wind, swelled into these mighty, solemn tones. This kind of wild natural music was now so extremely uncommon, and to most people so entirely unknown, that the young Swede felt tempted to think it sorcery, or some such superhuman power. In his cradle he remembered to have heard songs and tales of the ancient heroes of his country, in which, though untouched by fingers, the harps of the Scalds breathed music from the soft breezes of the air, or from the threatening motions of the storm. Soon, therefore, this strange music became familiar to him; only the sportive jests and fancies that had come into his mind so short a time be-

fore, now gave place to a far different feeling of deep joy, that was diffused through his whole soul. Gravely and silently the northman looked up to the deeply darkening clouds, and listened in joyous transport to the wonderful tones of the harps. Then Sophie Ariele whispered, in a soft voice, "On just such an evening as this I was separated from my parents." Her husband and the stranger youth gazed on her astonished; but as they listened to the vibrations of the wonderful harps, and beheld Sophie Ariele's sweet melancholy smile, they could find no words by which to change the conversation from this subject, which was so dear, and yet so full of sorrow. Dreamily smiling, she continued—"I see it still before my eyes, though the meaning of the whole has never been distinctly clear to me. My mother rocked me in a beautiful silver cradle, and prattled to me in little poems and tales, that I might not be frightened at the thunder of the mighty battle which my father and some other noble warriors were fighting, deep, deep down in the echoing valleys. The noise of the combat sometimes arose to our high mountain castle, and re-echoed from its rocky walls; then I laughed at the sweet chattering of my dear mother, and because she laid me again in my cradle (for I was too old for such a baby's bed). I could already chase the butterfly in its swift course—I could never catch it, but would sing after it wild songs, which only made it fly more rapidly than before, and the various colours of its fluttering wings glisten more brightly.

"But now the thunder of the battle rattled nearer, and the glittering of the fighting host beamed wilder. My mother anxiously called for her servants. 'They are all flown, from terror of death, noble mistress,' said, in a mournful, faltering voice, the only one of her train who remained faithful to her, and heard her. We always called this gentle creature Täublein,* because she was so soft and white and mild. I believe that, in the stammering of my earliest childhood, I had by chance first called her by this name, instead of the one that really belonged to her; and it suited her so well, that she ever afterwards retained it. But to continue. The gentle Täublein floated in, sighing, 'Ah, that I could bring an olive-branch, the glorious type of rest and peace! But all is trouble and

* Täublein is a German word, signifying *little dove.*

war; the squadrons of my noble lord yield; and fearfully sounding, the trumpet-call and arrows of the enemy threaten them with pursuit!'

"'No enemies have ever broken in hitherto,' said my mother, with a proud smile, that fell like a sunbeam on my terrified soul; 'and,' continued she, 'my noble husband and hero has built his castle so high above all the other dwellings, that no fear for me, or for his only child, might disturb his mighty battles against the fierce foe rising from the hot south. Those coward slaves have fled in foolish, needless fear, and they will soon repent of having forfeited their happy abode in this secure castle; but you, dear little creature, faithful Täublein, shall be so much the dearer to us, now you are the only one left to us. It may be that we shall enjoy a far more quiet, peaceful, and happy life when my husband goes no more down to fight in the plain. But, alas! how will *he* support that sad, sad peace which falls to the lot of the vanquished!'

"Then my dear mother began to weep burning tears, and at the same time my father entered the lofty room, his head sunk low upon his breast: I still see him before me. Wild as a cloud of mist in a storm, a soldier's white mantle flew around his shoulders. The metal of his helmet or cap—for I do not rightly know what he wore upon his raven locks—strangely glistened in the brilliantly lighted saloon, outvying the brightness of the wax candles, and made me break forth into a scream of sorrow and lamentation. Then my proud father restrained his noble passion, and talked in a low voice to my beautiful mother. Few words did I catch of what they said to each other, for soon I sank into a deep, deep slumber, overcome by weariness and fear. But such words! Even now I hear them sometimes in my sorrowful dreams, full of the most desponding meaning; now threatening separation—now promising hope; now weighing down my soul into the depths of an abyss—now raising it again to the glorious heights of heaven."

With a singular expression in her soft eye, she first looked down before her, as into her grave; then up to heaven, as towards a place in which she had already secured everlasting blessedness. Gustavus Gyllenskiold was almost tempted to ask about these dreams: it was in dreams that all his own sorrow dwelt, and he

experienced a secret hope and a sweet delight that he had seldom felt before. Just as he was about to speak, he was stopped by a gentle sign from Sophie Ariele's sylph-like hand—a sign that seemed to say—

"Oh, silent, silent be!
Speak not, ask not, think not:
There's music, sweeter far
Than song or voice—
Oh, silent, silent be!
Speak not, ask not, think not;
Life's dream, life's hope, life's joy
Keep secret, hid;
While silent, silently
Are woven unknown spells,
Unknown, but true!"

Was it that she had in reality sung these words, or had Gustavus only imagined them? For a few moments his mind hovered in the pleasing uncertainty of a beautiful dream.—But she continued:

"When I awoke, the kind attendant Täublein was sitting on my little bed, with bright tears in her loving eyes: she told me a wonderful tale of a little princess, whose parents, living formerly in great magnificence, had wished, on the loss of their fortune, that their only daughter should remain in quiet seclusion from the evil race of men that dwelt elsewhere, and should find a recompence in the deep joy of giving and receiving love, for the lost pomp and power of her former station. And then she painted to me so beautifully the sweet joys of such a life, that I felt tears of eagerness upon my cheeks. Then my mother came in, and said, 'Thou, thyself, art the little princess, dear Ariele; and thy wise father has destined for thee as happy a lot as Täublein has just sketched.'

"At that time I was a more than usually thoughtless child; but the feeling that I was to be separated from my parents for ever, brought streams of tears into my eyes; and even now, when I think of it, when—"

Her bright blue eyes were filled with tears, and holding a snowy white handkerchief before her sweet child-like features, she disappeared from the bower.

Chapter VIII.

Both her companions for a long time remained silent and deeply affected, each looking down on the ground before him, sunk in earnest contemplation. After awhile, Gyllenskiold said mildly, "I hope my noble host knows how perfectly innocent I was of giving any inducement to call forth the sorrowful recollections which the sweet lady felt in her tender heart?"

Doctor Matthew only pressed the hand of his guest in silence. But the harps in the trees sounded even more solemnly, in full-toned chords, from the rising blasts of the night-wind: their harmony seemed all at once to open the secrets of the physician's heart, and he said, "Sophie has to-day disclosed her beautiful soul and her strange recollections to you, as I have never before seen her in the presence of a stranger. Neither will I, therefore, any longer consider you a stranger, but tell you all I have ever been able to discover of her wonderful condition. In vain, since the time that Sophie bestowed on me her love, and extended to me her beautiful hand, in promise that I was her chosen husband, I have endeavoured to gain the least traces of her uncertain origin. She could tell me no more, besides what she has just related, than that her faithful attendant, whom she called Täublein, had carried her from the wonderful palace of her parents down into a lonely village, and had confided her to the care of a kind shepherd's family; rewarding the good people, for the attention they were expected to bestow upon her, with rich jewels, prepared from the most exquisite mountain crystals. But the simple shepherds understood not the value of these costly gifts, but gave them for playthings to their children; while they brought up Sophie from pure compassion for her condition, that seemed to them so helpless. But those things which men often do from charity, reward them for ever—certainly hereafter, and it may be even in this present world. In both cases did Sophie's foster-parents unquestionably find it so. Two learned mineralogists, from some distant city, sought and found hospitable protection in the shepherd's house. At this meeting—

which we might, perhaps, erroneously suppose to have come about by chance—the strangers told them of the value of their crystals, and offered, when their condition should allow them to do so, to purchase them, as their own conscience and the costliness of the jewels required. After that time, Sophie's foster-parents lived in great, and for them almost unheard-of, happiness; and they would have loved the child Ariele, who had brought such good fortune, still more deeply than before, if it had been possible. At last the two good people, almost on the same day, passed into a higher existence; and Sophie Ariele now employed her wealth in leading that benevolent life that I pictured to you before, from which I, if it may be so said, took her away, yet only in order to guide her, according to her own wish, in a still wider circle of benevolent peace and blessed performance of her duties. The happy influence over my physical trials, and my profession generally, which she has since—"

He stopped short, for now Sophie again entered the bower, the little white dove upon her shoulder; her face sweetly beaming with unruffled serenity, like the stars appearing upon the beautiful southern brow of heaven. It might almost have been doubted whether she was indeed the same person who so short a time before had been overwhelmed in so deep a sorrow. She said, with a happy, silvery laugh, "Do not believe everything, my friend, that Doctor Matthew has been pleased to tell you about his wife? for that he was talking of her I can easily perceive, by his so suddenly breaking off the conversation, and by his still embarrassed silence. Not, perhaps, that I thought such a wise head could wish to teaze you with silly stories. No; Doctor Matthew imagines everything marvellous that he relates of me: I only wonder that he has never been pleased to declare that my parents are of high imperial descent; or that I am some sort of demi-goddess—and this merely because I intrude a little now and then upon the domain of his art, and am wonderfully successful in it too!"

Gyllenskiold smiled, and was silent: he could not help thinking of what he had quite distinctly seen and heard on his awaking, namely, how Ariele had torn to pieces the prescription so carefully written by the Doctor, and let them fly out of the window—and how she had so playfully scolded her husband for having done any-

thing without consulting her. It seemed as if Sophie understood the smile of her guest. With a slight blush she said—"But there is one, of whom my good husband cannot have said enough—I mean in all that he has said in praise of that faithful servant of my parents, whom we we called Täublein. Unfortunately, I have never seen her since the day when she put me under the care of the good, kind shepherd; yet, at the sight of real doves, her pure form seems to return to me, almost as if she had been a real dove herself!" And then a soft laugh passed over Sophie's tender lips; yet soon becoming serious again, she said to the physician, "Do you not think, my love, that my frolics with the dove you are so fond of might now be of some use in helping to drive from our noble guest his unhappy dreams? for, you see, I have managed to pick up some few scraps out of your lectures—the animal vital power of an innocent animal over the sulphureous—I meant to say, over the nitrous—over the exhalation of the demoniacal natural powers, I think—" She stopped, and said, at last, half in jest, but almost weeping, "Now help me a little, when you see that I am puzzled with your learned way of talking, and in my sorrow and necessity use one word for another, or even three for one!"

Doctor Matthew said, laughing, "I have already told our new friend, dear Sophie, that you would win a doctor's hat, not in a common university, but by dint of your own peculiar faculty of science, although your beautiful name signifies as much as wisdom; but a much higher, far more infallible wisdom—" and his voice became louder as he spoke, and his eyes sparkled with a glow of inspiration—"this, Sophie Ariele, is yours, and I willingly put myself under your skilful guidance."

Ashamed, she let her soft eyes sink upon the ground; yet, when the physician, with the eager questions which the love for his mysterious profession and his vividly aroused sympathy for Gyllenskiold inspired, began to inquire in what way the little dove would contribute to the recovery of his guest, Sophie forgot all her shy timidity. As if winged with eagerness for the health of the sufferer, she said, "My favourite dove must be near him when he slumbers: as soon as she hears him speak or sigh in his evil dreams, or moan as though in pain, then, frightened, she flutters about her wings; so he wakes, and his eyes seeing the pure white

wings as they hover around him, while he is softly fanned by their gentle motion, the demon forms of that dark world will be forgotten, and a perception as of the protecting presence of a pure angel will fall on his softened soul. Trust me and my dove: such tender inhabitants of the air are a fear and horror to night demons, as the golden breezes of the morning to bats and owls. Yes, my little dove will conquer! It lives and laughs in the noon-day sunshine; the gloomy, unsubstantial world of dreams flies far away, where only innocence, light, and joy reign!"

She repeated the last words almost singing, and immediately she took the white dove caressingly in her tender hands; then placed it upon Gustavus's shoulder, and whispered a few words, as if in command, which it was almost impossible to hear, for at that moment the harps in the trees sounder louder than ever. With a deep inward shudder, Gustavus remembered his dreaming struggles to understand the songs of those fearfully beautiful women. But here was the sweet opposite of them all: instead of the sharply glancing, mockingly laughing forms, a sweet, gentle countenance beamed on him; instead of their wild songs, breathed a mild, peaceful whisper through his inmost being. The dove, which at first had moved somewhat painfully upon his shoulder, now bent down, sweetly caressing him.

With one look at Sophie Ariele, Doctor Matthew, as became his duty as host, accompanied the poor dreamer to the bed that was carefully prepared for him.

Chapter IX.

A small chamber, softly scented by frankincense, had been prepared for the youth. From the ceiling was suspended, by a silver chain, a beautifully shaped silver lamp; and on the side where Gyllenskiold's bed was standing, its too dazzling light was tempered by a tall shade; while in the opposite direction, where the walls were covered with green silk hangings embroidered with silver, it streamed with so much the greater brilliancy, like the light which

the full moon sheds upon a silent meadow. By the side of the pleasantly darkened couch was placed a young laurel-tree, in an elegant antique vessel: upon its branches the dove instantly alighted, soon to sink with dreamy cooing into sweet slumber. Outside the high window, that was partly open, and only defended from the air by a thin curtain, nightingales were singing upon blossoming orange-trees. One solitary picture was upon the wall, representing a group of angels as large as life, with all the sweet magic of their form and colour, watching over the sleep of the pious pilgrim and patriarch Jacob; while the demons and wild animals of the desert flew far away, and could be dimly seen in the indistinct darkness of the back-ground.

When Gustavus had laid himself down to rest, the physician, from a crystal cup, gave him a sleeping potion, which passed through his veins pleasantly cooling, and at the same time softly glowing, and said, with a smile—"You see I would fain connect something of my profession with the cure that is to be wrought by the lady Ariele's dove; but do not think that I meddle unbidden in her work. I prepared for you this cup with the approval of my guiding nymph; for," added he, "though I do not by any means consider myself a Numa, yet she sometimes seems to me to be an Egeria." Then glancing at the picture of the protecting angels, he said, gravely—"May they be with you!" and left the chamber.

Full of inexpressible delight, Gustavus sank into a refreshing and, at first, perfectly dreamless slumber. Yet soon the grisly long-bearded kings' heads rose up before the tormented youth, and he groaned—"Away from me, ye threatening forefathers! or at least, keep far away from me those woman-forms which shine with such unearthly beauty!" But these sparkling forms, with their blasting eye-balls, were just rising up out of the chaos, and Gustavus moved in fearful shuddering; when something floated around his head like a pleasantly cooling breeze of May. Waking, he saw the dove startled from her slumber, fluttering about with extended wings. A sweet melancholy filled his heart, at the white, brightly glancing vision; smiling, he beckoned to her, and she sank down upon the pillow of his bed, caressingly laying her white feathers on his burning cheeks, then again flew up to the laurel tree, and for a long time looked kindly at the youth from her watchful eyes, turning her graceful head from one side to the other, till at last again

in slumber, she hid it under her snowy wing. Then Gustavus also laid himself down again in soft sleep.

But after a while, the kings' heads from the world of his dreams sprang up indeed, but far, far away; looking at him more in earnest sorrow than in anger. And the other glittering forms hovered about in the horizon, but like distant stars, so small and distant did they seem. "It is the most glorious firmament that I have ever seen," said the dreamer. Then the sparkling forms floated nearer, encircling each other like wild shadowy comets, and describing wonderfully strange figures of a dance, which the youth felt himself obliged, he knew not why, to follow and define. Then the enigmatical frantic song again began to sound, and the kings' heads rose up red with passion, like flames. Yet again the dove hovered and fluttered around him; again the youth awoke, breathing deeply, and again the dove and the youth sank down to sleep. And now the dreamer saw the kings' heads and the women as in the deep slumber of death, stretched upon a wide ocean; the surface was undisturbed by the slightest breath of air, while it bore their horrible corpses as if it had been firm land. "Is this ocean then frozen?" Gyllenskiold asked. Then the death-sleepers began to sing their old song—"Life is death," and Gustavus began involuntarily to sing with them; it is true only softly, very softly, but he knew well enough that the sound arose louder and louder from his breast; and just before he was waking in wild fear, he sighed to himself—"Oh! help me little dove! oh! wake me, little dove, thou faithful attendant!" But the little dove must have been now very fast bound in sleep, for it stirred not from the boughs of the laurel tree. Yet in the dream of the youth something floated like a dove. A white, tender creature, with butterfly wings, descended from the clouds; while, from above, a king clothed in sky-blue armour, and a queen in silvery white garments, which were set off as it were by the glowing twilight and the soft rays of the moon, looked down after it. And the hero said to the lady—"Yonder see our beloved daughter Psyche! now must she accomplish her first wandering upon earth; but animated with an inexpressibly higher love, she will again float up to us." The queen smiled approvingly, through the tears which filled her eyes, and drew again the clouds of dew like curtains before herself and her husband. The hover-

ing form sang soft tones, half like the cooing of a dove, and half like the murmuring of harps; and at her song the horrible chorus rising from the slumbering dead was hushed, and they themselves sank into the sea. But the sea had suddenly become a beautiful green meadow; the form of the lady descended upon it, and walking here and there sowed a quantity of flowers, which immediately sprang up, while the beautiful vision said—"Life is life!" Then the dreamer sang after her, with overflowing joy—

"Spring up beneath her wand,
The flowers she cherisheth;
There is a life beyond
The life that perisheth.

"Praise on her happy breath,
Wafting away all strife;
For this life is not death—
No; life indeed is life!"

He heard himself sing, and he awoke, but this time not in terror, but intense delight; drinking in the rosy tints of the young morning, and surrounded by the songs of nightingales and the harmony of Æolian harps; and near him, on the pillow, sate the white dove, joyously caressing him with her wings, and looking on him still more kindly than the evening before from the boughs of the laurel tree.

Chapter X.

Gyllenskiold continued to live after this at the house of the physician, spending such days as those only can imagine who have passed out of fearful woe into joy, from morbid misery into sound health of body and mind. The sweet quiet which was wonderfully united in Ariele's whole nature and existence with almost childlike gaiety, filled his proud heart with the magic of an idyllic blessed peace. No earthly wish, not even the least pang from any selfish desire, once troubled the calm serenity of Gustavus's soul. He felt that there were bonds in truth

which belong infinitely more to eternity than time; and for this reason his spirit felt no more impulse after relations of this world, but flew as on the wings of the dove upwards to its heavenly habitation.

The hateful glittering women had almost entirely vanished from his dreams; the pale countenances of the old crown-bearers did indeed sometimes appear, but they were mild and kind, and in soft, indistinct whispers breathed reconciliation to the soul of the now happy youth. When once he answered in his dreams—"Yes, life is not death! yes, life is life!" the oldest of the crowned heroes approached him, rising as high as his girdle from the chaotic mist of dreamy waves, and said in a deep-toned voice, which was in harmony with the strange accompaniment of distant thunder—"Yes, life is life! but the wisdom of Asa knew a still more beautiful language which I will teach you, and which you shall demand of the beautiful elves of the air, when—" He was silent. Then the breast-wound which had given him his glorious death, a hundred years ago, suddenly reopened and covered Gyllenskiold's garment with a deep purple like a gushing fountain; so that he said, with rejoicing spirit—"See! old ancestor, now I also glory in royal garments, now I revel in them as well as you!" But as he slept, his own voice again sounded clear and fearful, and with a scream of terror he woke from his slumber.

Doctor Matthew sate near him, and said, with a smile, shaking his head—"So, so! the Lady Sophie Ariele has again shewn herself right, and I have judged quite wrong about her infallibility—when she maintained that in the wonderful web of your dreams, among other companions you have one very self-satisfied comrade, or rather master, who may be called Pride."

With a sorrowful smile Gustavus looked up at the physician, and whispered—"What! could Sophie Ariele really think anything so ill of me?"

"It is not the worst thing that can be thought of a man," returned the physician, kindly. "Besides," he added, joking, "as to ambition, the less Lady Ariele says of that the better, since she herself inhabited so lofty a dwelling, until my love, or rather her wish to aid me in my physician's calling, enticed her down to the strand of this southern sea, and you herself may determine if she

would love the deep with so unspeakable a love did not something of the high heaven belong to it?" At the last words his voice and the expression of his noble face had again become grave.

Gyllenskiold mused for awhile, then he said—"Why should the patient hide anything from the physician! especially from so good and kind a physician—a physician who works under Sophie Ariele's beautiful direction, and is clearly conscious of it himself? You must know, then, that ever since I first began to think, perceptions of proud magnificence have hovered round me; they floated even in the unconscious dreams of my childhood. It might have been only the silly tales of my first nurses, or deceiving elves sporting with my soul; but ever since that time I have believed myself to be the unfortunate son of royal parents, who by the contrary storms of life had been driven back into the darkness of private station; and I remember, even now, ancient tales or sayings which refer indeed to a princely, yes, regal descent of our race. I have already often related these to you and Ariele. It is true that I cannot escape from the proud images of a splendour that has passed away. When now the crowned heads in my dreams shake their grey heads so disapprovingly, I think of myself as their great great grandson, whom they blame for his inactivity and weakness, and who has done nothing to restore the past glory of his race. And indeed, my noble friend, they are not wrong, for see—"

But his proud words were silenced, for the lovely sounds of Sophie Ariele's harp murmured from the garden, and her beautiful voice accompanying it with the following song:—

"Fairy children, happy dwellers
Of the palace of the air,
In the battle of existence
Conquering without strife or care;
Gambollers in the golden sunlight,
Weavers gifted with high song—
What creature you doth most resemble,
All the breathing world among?

"Every thing is like unto you,
Like in songs of happy words,
If they did but know it rightly,
Merry, merry little birds!

"You are almost like the flowers—
But that you your pinions raise
Unto higher, holier bowers,
More aërial sanctuaries.

"They who sing the sweetest chorus
Mount upon the highest air;
Mounting, singing—singing, soaring—
Joys are round them everywhere.
Oh! what height has each one ventured
Far into the skies alone!
Aye! what life has *he* attained to,
Who his God has truly known!"

The last line was repeated again and again, with beautiful variations, till at last it resembled choral music, and ceased in one loud, swelling chord.

"'Who his God has truly known,'" said Gustavus, deeply moved, pressing the hand of his host and physician, and then adding—"From henceforth the old crowned heads, with their ambitious dreams, shall no more trouble me."

Chapter XI.

Gustavus Gyllenskiold performed what he had promised, and more too; as it often happens with human expectations and promises, either the intention is forgotten, or else it is overstepped.

Since the morning on which Sophie Ariele had given her guest permission to relate to her something of the ancient noble ballads of his northern ancestors, he had often sunk into a gloomy silence, for he had formerly desired to be united with that glorious company of heroes. And if she looked at him with a questioning smile, he used to softly hum the words—

"Oh! what height has each one ventured
Far into the skies alone!
Aye! what life has *he* attained to,
Who his God has truly known!"

But one day an expression of discontent passed over the beautiful lady's countenance; she took her harp, and struck the strings with such a firm, proud touch, you would not have believed her tender

fingers possessed so much power, and sang to a melodious air the following verses :—

"All things are as God has willed them
To the pure and upright mind;
All things fair, if men fulfilled them,
Tasting of the joys they find.

"Take then home, sweet peace, and cherish
All the silent gifts she brings;
Shield her, guard her, lest should perish
The fair things to which she clings.

"Thirst not for the fight so sorely,
All's not lost that is delayed;
Many a noble wish is granted
While in peace our hearts are stayed.

"Not in vain the ancient heroes,
Clad in glory haunt your rest;
Not in vain their breathing chorus
Stirs the life-blood in your breast.

"Noble deeds they come to waken,
Thoughts of old heroic days,
Every earth-born tie to slacken,
Every meaner thought to raise.

"Yet, poor dreamer, rest a season—
All's not lost that is delayed;
Many a noble wish is granted
While in peace our hearts are stayed."

"If you would only tell me plainly what I ought to do, and what I ought not to do, kind Sophie Ariele," said Gyllenskiold, eagerly. But she only shook her beautiful head disapprovingly, and when he expected to receive a reproof, vanished, without one parting word, behind the sky-blue curtains of her apartment.

"One cannot be displeased with her," said Doctor Matthew, laughingly, as he wished his Swedish guest a good night and tranquil dreams; at the same time begging him not to consider it an inhospitable disturbance if he was awakened early the following morning by a noise at his chamber-window. "For," added he, still smiling, "it is time to expect a carrier-pigeon from Farenberg, and his winged messengers pay no respect to our sublunary circumstances. They flutter impatiently against the first window they come to, and your chamber looks towards the north."

Gustavus took leave of his noble host, with a countenance

more smiling than the gloomy state of his mind warranted; although he would fain have concealed his trouble even from himself. Sophie's displeasure (if displeasure it might be called) threw an oppressive weight upon his whole being, for he too plainly felt that she was angry with him on account of the too-yielding submissiveness which sometimes strangely humbled his proud spirit, and with which he had already so often reproached himself. Well might the beautiful lady imagine he did not really possess any of those noble longings after high deeds which, in true men, never die; since they only showed themselves as pale, spectral images, or as phantastic, flitting meteors, which soon again yielded to the sleepy clouds of undisturbed repose. And yet he was truly conscious that the words Ariele had that morning sung were but a message, pointing out to his too rash thoughts and wild imaginations the way to peace; and, moreover, that this was only to be gained by a continual series of hard, inward struggles.

"Oh, Ariele!" he softly murmured, as he closed his eyes in sleep, "thou graceful, capricious Ariele, changing like the airy images in a stormy morning in Spring—now soft and gentle, now earnest and solemn as arrayed for some holy war; and you, ye brave hero princes of my ancestors, shall again possess your power over my soul. Ah, well; we shall see." And the proud, slumbering youth whispered the following words of a song:—

"From the golden clouds descending,
Borne upon the midnight air,
With the stormy ocean blending,
Above, below, and everywhere,
Pressing on my mind and sense
With a mighty influence,
Gleaming now, now overcast,
Comes the glory of the past."

Scarcely had sleep closed the outer world from the eyes of Gustavus, than he saw the most ancient of the kingly heroes standing by his side; the same who had talked with him of the wisdom of Asa, and had promised to teach him a more beautiful language. But this time he rose only as far as the girdle, from out of the billowy flood of cloud which was always seen in the dream. In majestic beauty the ancient hero stood before him, clad in glittering steel; the joints of his armour were adorned with golden

foliage, and the rivets with golden angel-heads; while from the wound in his breast flowed the pure blood, encircling his cuirass as a bright purple scarf given by a beautiful lady to a noble knight as a love token of victory; and the hero, kindly bending over his descendant, whispered to him—

"At present you do not understand what true love is—you do not understand the word as it comes to you in the old songs from the beautiful heroic ages. Love is no selfish desire. Love is a holy remembrance. Love is the reflection of the inward heavenly life, like the bright image of the sun seen upon the surface of the tranquil waters. Love even preserves the image of *its* sun, though that sun be long set, long since veiled behind the awful shadow of the earth."

"How often does concealment hasten on fulfilment!" said the dreaming Gustavus.

"Right," answered the hero; "therefore life is not death, nor is life always life. But—" He seemed about to conjure up from the ever-gushing fountains of his immortal life some emblematic vision, and at the same time wore a look of almost painful compassion, as if he was fearful of frightening the poor listener with his words; but at this moment a rustling and fluttering was heard against the window of his chamber, which drove away this prophetical dream. Full of astonishment, the youth looked about him; but quickly remembered Doctor Matthew's warning of the evening before. And then Sophie Ariele's white dove, which always perched near his couch on the laurel branches, like a kind protector, flew towards her dark companion, who was beating with his wings and beak against the window, and increased his desire to get into the room. Gustavus sprang up to let in the distant traveller, when there sounded a frightful rustling of gigantic wings in the night air. The little dove might well tremble before a vulture or an eagle, and with the strength of despair he flew against the window, and shattering one of the panes to fragments fluttered into the bosom of the youth, that his little trembling heart might beat against the heart of the brave knight. Gustavus kindly caressing the little creature, discovered the letters neatly fastened beneath its wings, so that they should not hinder it in its flight, and yet be safely sheltered from the dew and rain. The dove

patiently allowed the letters to be taken from him, and then flew to the laurel branches to his white companion, where with graceful movement of their heads, they kept up an eager cooing, for they had much to say to each other. Meanwhile Gustavus examined the two letters, and recognised the hand-writing and the seal of his friend Farenberg. The one addressed to Doctor Matthew he carefully laid aside; but the other, which was directed to himself, he quickly opened, and read the following words:—

"By the time the dove returneth
Health is almost thine again,
Cherished by a gentle being,
Whose care like soft and summer rain
On the flowers falls noiselessly,
Without harm or injury.

"Spread not thou thy arms, embracing
The unknown, yet sweet delight:
Glowing cheeks have airy breezes—
Yet who greeteth air and light?

"Calm, in humble meekness follow
Wheresoe'er she guideth thee:
Be not careful to discover
What or whence her state may be.

"Even I can scarce imagine
What her kindred, what her race;
Yet am ever most desirous
To spy out her airy trace.

"This beseemeth high inquirers,
Spiritual paths that tread;
But let sweet anticipation
Satisfy thy heart instead.

"Live and love, thy bosom keeping
Pure as spirit of a sylph;
Struggle nobly as a hero,
Serve thy mistress, rule thyself.

"Put the world and evil visions
Manfully beneath thy feet;
What refreshes, and not injures,
Is in nature pure and sweet.

"Yes, before my dove returneth,
Health, I feel, is thine again;
Cherished by a gentle being,
Whose care as soft as summer rain
On the flowers falls noiselessly,
Without harm or injury."

Gustavus glanced involuntarily at the two doves, as if they could help him to interpret the sense of these mysterious words; they sate upon the laurel branches cooing and caressing each other, when suddenly, with affright, they nestled together. The window clattered; a large bird of prey flew against it, either caught in the fragments of the broken glass, or filled with rash boldness from a desire after such beautiful prey. Making horrible screams he strove to get his great body into the room, when Gustavus Gyllenskiold seized his good sword and plunged it into the bold robber's heart, and it fell back silent and lifeless. The doves nestled still and peacefully together, and the youth sank back on his couch, in a sweet slumber.

Chapter XII.

On the day following, Doctor Matthew might be seen walking cautiously towards the sea-shore, preceded by a Moor, in an African dress, whose bleeding brow was carefully bound up with healing bandages and balsams. At his slightest motion to leave the footpath, the Doctor threateningly raised the well-polished pistol he held in his hand. The Moor was terrified, and bowed submissively, with his hands crossed on his breast, before Doctor Matthew, who pointed in the direction in which their path lay. After walking in this strange way for some time, the Doctor said, in the *lingua Franca*, which is understood by almost all Mussulmen—

"Will you swear to me by your Allah, that yonder pirate ship, to whose gang you belong, will leave our coast within an hour?" The Moor nodded in affirmative. "And," continued Doctor Matthew, "that from this hour you will injure no one on these shores, either in freedom or property?" The Moor again bowing his head, swore the fulfilment of these conditions with the most fearful and horrible oaths.

In vain he motioned to the wretched man to cease his horrible imprecations; when at last he had made an end of his fearful words. he leant against the stem of a tall poplar, to regain

his breath; the tree seemed to shrink from his approach, and all its leaves began to tremble.

Doctor Matthew asked him angrily who had taught him to call such horrible powers to his aid. The Moor answered hastily, grinning in scorn—"You, yourself; if you wish to make quite sure of a thing, I have given you all you could desire on such occasions, and perhaps rather more, so you see I am not only an honourable merchant, but also a very liberal one. May I now be suffered to depart without danger from that little villain of a pistol you are aiming at me behind?"

"Wait!" said the physician, authoritatively; then with firm steps he approached the African, and examined with great presence of mind, and with the most gentle hand, the dressing on his bloody brow; and finding everything in right order, he said—"Now you may depart; yet for the sake of freedom, life, and health, I should counsel you to remain. Go, and think of your oath."

The liberated Moor climbed swiftly up a steep rock that overhung the sea, looking down and laughing contemptuously as soon as he was out of reach of Doctor Matthew's shot. "Yes, I will think of it. We bold sailors will raise anchor without hurting any one, in life or goods; but what happens when we come again has nothing to do with my oath."

"Perjured infidel!" exclaimed Doctor Matthew, raising his pistol to take sure aim on the black, so soon as he should again emerge from his hiding place. But the cautious Moor knew another way back to the shore, and he was not visible till he was far distant. Doctor Matthew fired after him ineffectually. He could see the black put off from shore in a well-manned boat, and joining the pirate ship about a cannon's shot off, then put to sea."

Gustavus Gyllenskiold, who was seeking his friend and physician, heard the report of the pistol, and hastened to him, inquiring the cause of the disturbance, and of the displeasure expressed on Doctor Matthew's countenance.

"It is nothing," said he, laughing; "I have only been playing Don Quixote, and in a way perhaps more suited to an inexperienced boy than a physician more than thirty years old; listen, and you shall judge me. I rose early, in order to make some experiments in the theory of sound and echo, by firing my pistols, and went down

to the shore, in the hope of finding some object for my aim, for it seemed foolish to be carrying a weapon in my hand for no other end than to make a useless noise; and so far I was right, as the event proved; for scarcely had I arrived at a spot between the hills that was suitable for my experiment, than I saw a Moorish pirate-ship cruising along our coast, and a bandit, with a drawn sabre, sprang from the thicket upon me. I retreated from my bold antagonist through the bushes until I had loaded my pistol, then turned my face towards my enemy, and fired. The ball struck my assailant, who fell bleeding to the ground. Until then, you see, I was not to blame. I then hastened to him, raised him from the ground, and, after taking away his arms, bound up his wound to the best of my power; nor perhaps would any one condemn me for this."

"I, at least, would not, so heaven help me!" said Gustavus Gyllenskiold, eagerly. "When an enemy lies wounded on the ground, who would do otherwise, especially if he were master of your noble art?"

"Well," continued the physician, "but then, instead of taking him to the city prison, and seeking to gain information of the whole robber crew, which might have saved many unprotected vessels from the effect of his cannon, I sought to bind a pirate by an oath, and allowed the spy to return safely to his companions. Pray, Colonel Gyllenskiold, what do *you* say to this excellent policy?"

"That probably, if he had attacked me," answered Gustavus, after much consideration, "I should have dismissed him in the manner you have done."

"Do not misunderstand me," said the doctor, laughing; "this is not all—if the matter were to end here, it would be an affair of Don Quixotism merely."

"Certainly not," said Gustavus, joyfully, "and I understand the possibility of an approaching contest. Thanks to the dove-cure of your kind sylph, Sophie Ariele, I may yet take part in it."

"Sylph?" repeated the physician, laughing, and shaking his head.

"So she appears to me, both waking and dreaming," continued Gustavus; "and perhaps the extraordinary letter I have received from Farenberg has strengthened the idea; for you must know, doctor, that the dove-carrier came to me some hours ago. There is

your letter: mine I hope you will explain to me; our friend has written to me in verse, as the Pythian sibyls of old to their votaries. But now you had better hasten, that you may give all the information you can about these robbers of Tunis, and that we may take the necessary measures for the security of the town. Perhaps my military experience and love of war may be of service to your city. We Swedes can fight as well by sea as by land."

The physician took his friend's arm, and still discussing their means of defence, they hastened over the flowery shore back to Marseilles.

Chap. XIII.

In the meantime Sophie Ariele was in the garden with the dark carrier-pigeon, and her own white favourite; at the first beam of twilight they had fled through the broken window, chasing each other through the leafy branches, and as they caught each other by turns, ever and anon beginning again the joyful sport. As soon as they saw their kind mistress approaching, they alighted on her shoulders with sweet caresses. And so she passed on through the flowery glades like the spirit of morn, bearing on one shoulder the image of day, and on the other that of night; so well the adornment of the white and dark dove suited the beautiful lady's form. Sophie knew the messenger too well not to look beneath its wing: she was surprised to find there no letter for her husband. The dove looked in her face, as though it would say—

"Yes, yes; I brought them safely, but some one who has a right to them has taken them away."

Sophie glanced around her inquiringly; then she saw her husband and his guest coming from the town towards the garden, engaged in earnest conversation; they were busily discussing some subject, when Sophie's bright eyes discovered them. Sophie was amused, as we may ourselves have been, by seeing other people musing and pondering over some subject which we do not understand, and which appears to us very unimportant; deep study and investiga-

tion formed no part of Sophie Ariele's nature. Her glance of light quickly and clearly penetrated every mystery, or passed it by as a light cloud not worth analyzing. And now the playful gambols of the two doves diverted her attention from the conversation of her husband and his guest, which was, in truth, turned exclusively upon herself.

Doctor Matthew said to Gyllenskiold, "You must read what our mysterious friend Farenberg writes to me. Your verses and my prose may throw some light on each other; read me the letter, and perhaps between us we shall discover his strange meaning."

Gustavus read aloud the following words, written in the elegant characters of the Northern magi:—

"You are a wise physician, oh, Matthew! and you are right to love a gentle Sylph, and honour her as a guide. The flame of human philosophy rises towards heaven. You are right. The recovery of our friend Gustavus can only come from some higher sphere.

"Yet I do not rightly understand why this fairy child, rich in all the delights of feminine charms, should have placed herself in your path, friend Matthew. The spirits who speak to me on the subject are Sylphs; and, of all the elemental spirits, their language is the most indistinct, though at the same time the sweetest, excepting perhaps the water-nymphs, whom Theophrastus calls Undines.

"They could give me an account of the air-sprites, or Sylphs; but they entertain some jealousy against them, and will not.

"As to fire-spirits—well, Matthew, a good physiologist like you must know that there is no sporting with Salamanders, when they are permitted to mingle in the dance with the spirits of the air. The Sylphs, to be sure, take care of themselves, and keep safely away from the noisy sons of the flame, soaring aloft with their murmuring and buzzing into a pure, crystal sphere, which is the peculiar abode of those lovely children of the air; but the Salamanders raise together a confused noise and bustle, which I cannot here clearly describe.

"The earth-spirits, or Gnomes, cannot belong to the subject of your etherial companion and mistress, friend Matthew.

"Thus it is: although I know, in fact, next to nothing of your concerns, yet I feel impelled by an inward voice to write to you.

Look well to your sylph-like protecting spirit, for it is on the very point of vanishing from you. But there must be some wondrous circumstances attending so lovely an apparition. Who knows but her parents expect her return? Dost thou know her parents, Matthew? Perhaps thy beautiful lady will vanish just as thou art attentively reading these lines for the third or fourth time. Strengthen thyself against this blow, but remember its possibility."

It seemed at once, both to the physician and the soldier, as if they had never before read the concluding lines of the mysterious letter; and yet a painful, but cloudy, remembrance of them swept across their thoughts. Frightened, they first looked upwards, and then gazed, bewildered, around them. But there stood Sophie Ariele smiling before them, with her favourite white dove upon her arm.

Chapter XIV.

From this day, Gyllenskiold spent much time in providing for the defence and protection of the coast, in case of the return of the African pirate ship. His name, as a bold warrior, was not unknown in these regions, though he was far from having reached that rank which his ambitious heart had long aimed at; and to himself he appeared quite a forgotten and insignificant person. But the citizens of Marseilles rejoiced to be able to gain advice for their security from the Swedish Colonel, so renowned for writings on the military art, as well as warlike achievements; and the officers of the garrison, for the most part very young, received willingly the suggestions of the friendly Northlander, so that, besides being their counsellor, he soon became the commander of their forts.

In the delights of his favourite profession, Gustavus found himself quite freed from his evil dreams; what Sophie's dove-cure had begun, or perhaps nearly finished, was quite perfected by his now constant activity both of body and mind. When, after a hard day's work, devoted to putting the batteries in a state of defence, the disposing of sentinels, or the exercise of arms with the eagerly assembled citizens and country folks, he came back towards

evening to enjoy a little quiet conversation with his noble host, and then retired to refreshing slumber, he no longer needed Ariele's white dove to be on the watch for his dreams, and to awaken him from the charmed circle of his horrible nightly visitors. If the old kings ever appeared, they were kind and mild. The old hero had never taught his descendant the language, who indeed seemed no longer to need it; for Ariele's sweet words, "Life is life," had quite perfected Gustavus's serenity, and the pure spirit of these words was often wafted in harmony to Gustavus's slumbering soul from the garden bower, where the gentle lady sate late in the evening singing to her husband. Therefore, the white dove returned to the beautiful service of its mistress; and the recovered invalid, pressed on all sides, agreed to stay at Marseilles, as the protector of their shores. For Marseilles had given him a new existence, an existence which he formerly would have considered paradise. It seemed as though he had been conducted by a series of exquisite delights to this soothing retreat.

It is possible the reader may consider these ideas of the restored patient as visionary or extravagant; his daily occupations in the fortifications, or in reviewing the young soldiers, recalled him to active life. The more he was animated by his exertions, the more light and unimportant appeared his former thoughts; and Gyllenskiold had no time to think of Farenberg, or his enigmatical letters. The physician, too, was engrossed with the same apprehension, and the means taken to prevent the attack of the horde of robbers, which was known to be large and powerful. Sophie, meantime, showed so great an attention to the affairs of every day life; and though she sometimes had womanly fears, yet she soon recovered her calmness with such pious, trusting confidence, so like one of the graceful children of earth, that the two friends considered the mysterious hints of the northern sage as more and more improbable, and at last began to laugh together at the delusion, which before they had almost credited—that Sophie would pass away, air into air, like a dreamy cloud-image.

At last, the expectation that the Moorish robbers would attack Marseilles was given up, and the citizens felt half ashamed of having made so many preparations on account merely of the chance attack made by a pirate vessel. Yet they felt also that their pains and

trouble had not been thrown away in disciplining their young soldiers, and in the bulwarks Gyllenskiold had erected on their shore.

Gustavus began now to talk of his journey home; he loved his father-land too dearly, not to wish to carry back to it his soul and body, now animated with renewed health and courage. His noble host honoured these feelings in him, else he would have wished still to keep him on the beautiful shore of Provence. But now the little quiet circle felt the thoughts of their approaching separation, not with deep sorrow or affliction, but with soft emotions of gentle melancholy, thinking on the blessed, blooming harvest which the sunny rays of true friendship should hereafter warm into smiling, mellowed maturity. Yet Matthew, always desirous to maintain the fresh joy of life, struggled at these times against such feelings, by suggesting some joyful or pleasant conversation.

Thus it happened, one evening, a few weeks before Gustavus's intended departure, when they two stood alone on a beautiful vine mountain; before them lay a distant prospect of the varied country, now clothed in all the gorgeous tints of autumn, and of the dark sea, whose blue waves glittered in the bright rays of the southern sun. From the happy soul of Dr. Matthew streamed a flowery vein of jests and pleasant stories. And at times Gustavus smiled, pleased at the pleasure of his friend; yet, in a thoughtful mood he gazed into the heavens above, where the light fleecy clouds were passing hither and thither across the blue firmament, sometimes blending into familiar forms, and then again separating like a peaceful flock of sheep in a pleasant pasture. But now all the clouds had united in a strange enigmatical form, like some sorrowful figure, beautiful, and deeply veiled. Gustavus suddenly interrupted his friend's playful conversation, and pointing upwards, said—

"Do you see that?"

The physician looked up, and said—"Yes, it is a beautiful cloud," and added, laughing—"our friend Farenberg might easily fancy it a melancholy Sylph, and *demonstrate* in his own way every conceivable thing from that one sign; *imagine*, I should perhaps have said, for, in spite of all his great wisdom, his imaginative phantasies often get the upper-hand of him."

But Gustavus answered with melancholy earnestness, for he had

with difficulty suppressed, till now, the heavy feelings of his heart—

"Oh! my noble friend, why are we so incredulous of this northern sage? why so mistrustful of his spiritual knowledge, that we should throw aside his prophetic warning only as an impossible dream? It was very natural that our warlike preparations should make us forget these mysterious suspicions, and call us out of the world of conjecture. But since every one has given up the probability or even the possibility of an approaching combat; since even my eager expectations, I might almost say my wishes, have vanished before the general opinion, the words of Farenberg's letter have gained fresh power over my soul, and I know not whether—"

He paused, embarrassed; and the doctor laughingly continued his friend's sentence:—

"Whether at last Madame Sophie Matthew be not really and truly a spirit of the air, though from discretion she relinquishes the title of Sylph in her signatures and presentations."

Without sympathising in his merriment, Gustavus observed—"Yes; what you say sounds absurd, yet I cannot quite give up the idea. Then," he continued, with earnestness, "you have quite passed over the name of Ariele; and you, who so much delight in the works of the English Shakspeare, so little understood by most Frenchmen, you cannot have forgotten that the most charming of all sylphs conceived by poet's fancy is called Ariel."

Doctor Matthew appeared completely surprised, and very naturally so, for it was one of those occasions in which, by a single chance word, a long-felt and never clearly understood coincidence in the varying visions of this life is unexpectedly and at once explained.

"You are right," said he, after some thought, "and yet I might still be inclined to laugh, that in the fanciful images of a poet you have found the clue by which I am to find out my wife's lineage."

But he did not laugh, and Gustavus said—

"The sages of the old world have always held the dreams of the poets as the highest wisdom; and where is true wisdom to be found, if not in the mysterious creations of the old world, from which flowed the inward and holy life of the poet in an inexhaustible stream?"

Doctor Matthew's countenance had grown grave and solemn.

"Come," said he, with emotion, "home to my quiet hearth, that Sophie's gentle behaviour may convince you and me—for I must condescend for a moment to your poetic fancies—that she is not a spirit of the air, but a heavenly child of earth, bound, as we all are, in this sublunary world, to her own sphere of existence. Come, she will scold us for keeping her waiting for supper."

With quickened steps the two friends returned home through the deepening twilight, when the astonished domestics met them with the question—

"Oh! have you not met Madame Matthew? She went to find you, to call you to supper, and she has been gone already more than an hour."

Chapter XV.

It is impossible that the writer of this narrative should describe the bitter apprehension that fell, as some fearful night vision, on the soul of the physician; he seemed struck as by a thunderbolt at these words of the domestics. Still less can he relate the unspeakable anguish of both Matthew and Gyllenskiold when they returned in the first beam of the morning twilight, after having wandered the whole night along the coast, in the vain search for one who seemed to have vanished as a thin cloud. They could say nothing with looks and words, but, "Vanished—vanished, like a pale mist."

Heaven, in mercy to the sensitive heart, stupifies it with dark uncertainty, before it undergoes the most bitter of all sorrows, the loss of some infinitely loved being. Without any accurate perception of the truth, the soul is one moment awakened to certainty, and the next tossed in all the feverish excitement of hope, while the most fearful conjectures in a confused medley pursue us, seizing us as with harpy claws.

Exhausted by his fearful woe, on the evening of the following day, Doctor Matthew fell into a feverish slumber, ever murmuring in his dreams, "Farenberg was right. Her royal relations have enticed her back to them. Air into air!" But at last, while a few

solitary tears still trickled through his closed eyelids, his sad lamentations gave way to a peaceful slumber, which pressed so heavily upon him, that he was not disturbed; when about midnight there arose a violent storm of thunder and lightning—the sea rolled mountains high, and the earth trembled and shook as before an approaching earthquake.

But this strife of nature was, to the bold-spirited Swedish youth, the trumpet-call to battle. The soldier never bears misfortune better than in that proud moment when life and death are mingled together; and if they do not offer to the poor mortal immediate repose, yet with glittering hands they hold over him beautiful laurel wreaths, beckoning, "Dare!—seize it, fear not—and it is thine!"

Hoping to be led to some glorious field of exertion, Gustavus Gyllenskiold hurried through the terrified town. There mingled many good and noble feelings in the strong tumult of his conflicting ideas. But death would not crown his resolution, nor offer a balsam for the wound which Sophie Ariele's loss had left in his soul.

So had he wandered till nearly morning, when kind nature soothed her afflicted child, lulling his wearied soul to rest by the soft influence of the peaceful autumn air; and though the deepest sorrow still held its power over Gustavus, yet the first feelings of his anguish were over. Under the kindly shelter which the close-matted boughs of a thicket opportunely offered, he stretched his limbs, as in preparation for a peaceful death; and sleep wound her airy net around him, bringing all that sweet delight which we might call heavenly, were not heaven rather an awaking than a slumbering.

Chapter XVI.

"Death is Life!" With these words, after a short time, Gustavus awoke from sleep.

The old crowned hero had appeared to him in a gorgeous dream, opening to him the gates of a wonderfully beautiful world.

And there, with the golden rays of the morning sun streaming over him, stood the young wanderer, in all the glow of youthful beauty; he looked, as it were, like some cherub who, descending on some mighty errand, glances proudly over the earth as the momentary theatre on which his heavenly mission is to be accomplished, and already moves his invisible pinions, as if on the point of returning to his ever blooming home.

"Death is Life," repeated he, and the words came from his lips in song, and seemed accompanied in some wonderful manner by music, as Ariele's fanciful discourse formerly had mingled with the wild chorus of the Æolian harp. "Life is not Death! Oh, no—kind, graceful Ariele; thou art right—Life is Life—a sweet, innocent life—purified like thine own from the bitterness of death. Yet, when at last death approaches at the end of many, many happy years, when it comes at last serene and peaceful, for that eventful hour, O beautiful Ariele, has the old royal hero and priest of Asa, from whom I *am* descended, taught me in a hallowed dream this great truth, Death is Life! I will, I must teach it you also. Yet where, O sweet lady—Sophie Ariele—where shall I find you?"

Then the truth came before his bewildered senses, that her lovely form had disappeared from the world of reality, and his joyful serenity of soul was changed into the most poignant grief. Bewildered, he looked around him, as if in search of some magical means of opposing the arts by which he supposed Ariele had been stolen away. Something rustled over him among the boughs that were just tinged by the beams of morning; and wearied and shy, yet with kind caresses, Ariele's favourite white dove alighted on his breast, displaying a little paper fastened under her wing by a dark silk thread. With joyful feelings, Gustavus opened the artfully folded paper, and read the following words:—

"With my white dove on my still breast, I joyfully went to meet you loiterers, and dreamt a beautiful dream on a beautiful evening. The wise say that all life is only a beautiful dream, and so I have found it. Dark, fearful Moors, like demons who start from the earth to seize the spirits from some higher sphere, broke with laughter from the bushes, and seized me, and bore me to their ship, which lay at anchor in the gloomy bay. Oh! ye prudent! what was the use of all your defences, and all your exercises in bright

armour? they have stolen Ariele away from you. Yet the old reed-crowned man of the deep, called Neptune in the heathen day, has shown himself kind to me: I heard him called the father of the Undines. He raised his three-pointed spear in anger; the salt waves were agitated in storm, obliging the distressed pirate-ship to return to the shores of Provence. Exhausted by the storm, the ship and mariners rest quietly in the eastern cove. Now fight! now rescue Ariele, oh, ye brave ones! Thou, my dear husband, and thou noble Northlander, who knowest how to arrange the battle—quick! A few hours are yours for action, or you will never, never see Ariele more, until when body and soul are divided. Then fly my faithful, beloved little dove—fly, and may the spirits of air guide thee right!"

The little dove looked at Gustavus with its mild eyes, and then shook its head, as though it would ask—"Have I done right?"

"Quite right," said Gustavus, and gravely yet gently he beckoned with his hand to the little dove to fly on to Dr. Matthew's dwelling. After a few moments' delay, the little creature obediently flew away to his quiet home; and the young soldier thought for an instant—"What has given me in this strange manner a power over such tender little creatures?" Yet what would have produced it but the idea of Sophie's deliverance!

Gustavus suddenly started up, and hastened to the place where the brave young soldiers of Marseilles were accustomed to assemble, for they had not yet relinquished their favourite warlike exercises. The fearful storm of the preceding night had not kept them from their place of meeting. The youth on guard called out through the gray twilight—"Halt! who goes there?"

"War is our watchword once more!" answered Gyllenskiold, with enthusiasm. "Glorious danger stands at the gates of the next hour, and beckons us on. What! my worthy young comrade, you glow with joy at the sound, ha? Well, well, we are in real earnest now. Sentinel! call to arms!"

With eager delight the young soldier sent forth the animating call, and in a twinkling the little phalanx stood in well-disciplined order under arms, glad to exhibit their activity to their leader and instructor, and gladdened still more as he strode to and fro along the ranks, and disclosed to them, in words short but piercing as the

lightning flashes, the splendid deed of deliverance which was before them. In modest grace and tender beauty Sophie Ariele was the jewel of all Marseilles. To bring back in triumph to her home *that* lovely lady, what young heart would not beat with joyous, ardent enthusiasm!

Attached as they were by their earliest remembrances and habits to their native spot, and relying with proud confidence upon their power to defend it, which their practice in warlike exercises had given them, the young soldiers eargerly seized upon their leader's plan of attack upon the stranded Corsair. They lost not a moment, but, silent and determined, the little army broke up into small divisions, which separated in different directions, in order to prevent the pirates from renewing the embarkation of their plunder. What were numbers to them! would not a far less number of Provençales prove victorious, when fighting in the cause of Sophie Ariele!

With the adroitness of a general, Gyllenskiold sketched out to the dismembered little parties the plan of advance, so that the one which first fell in with the Moors might be promptly supported by the rest. If however, as might be hoped, the weary enemy carelessly allowed them to get round them, they were all to unite for a combined attack at the head of the eastern cove. The overflowing feelings of the combatants, as they pressed on their morning's march to meet the enemy, burst forth in many a martial song. To be sure, this was, properly speaking, forbidden by the necessity there was of taking their adversaries by surprise, in order that they might close in upon the line of their retreat towards the galley, and also that by finishing the contest as quickly as possible, they might expose the lovely prize to the least possible danger. But the still anxious march to the battle field has in itself its own peculiar pleasure, which may almost be compared to the mysterious delight of a Christmas-eve, and has been felt by every soul who has once experienced, in all its wonderfully mingled lights and shadows, the glorious delights of war.

Chapter XVII.

Doctor Matthew was at length awakened from his slumber by the firing of the not very distant battle. Neither the thunder and lightning nor the howling of the sea of the preceding night, had shaken his heavy sleep; yet was he now aroused by the cracking report of small arms, mingled now and then with the booming cannon-shot of the galley. But it is not always the loudest noise that awakens us from sleep; it is much more the interest the soul of the sleeper takes in the sound, which recalls the powers of his mind to real occurrences of this outer world. The mind of this bold and noble physician, who had formerly fought for his home and his country, was more affected by the sound of battle than by the thunder storm. Yet in his awakened soul the idea of those threatening pirates was in no way connected with the inexplicable disappearance of his sweet Ariele.

Hastily arming himself, and without allowing himself time to ask a single question, he rushed down through the trees of his garden—the laughing tokens, alas! of a happiness perhaps for ever flown!—in the direction in which the thundering roar of the battle led him, which, the nearer he approached it, seemed every instant to resound more loudly.

Uncertain which way to continue his course, he stood still at last under the thick foliage of some lovely acacia trees, and sighed from the bottom of his heart—"Oh, blessed God! show me my part also in these strange events which are going on around me; and unfold to me the terrible import of a day which has commenced so wonderfully, so fearfully, and so bloodily!"

It seemed as if his prayer had been heard, and answered in proportion both to its fervour and piety; for, on the instant, a wounded Moor tumbled from the precipice close by at his feet, madly shrieking as he fell, with his bloody sabre still fast clenched in his hand; and he bellowed once more in frantic rage; then there was a fearful rattling in his throat, and he stretched himself out, and—died.

But the little birds flew merrily over the scene of horror, sportively chasing one another, and warbling their joyous songs.

Chapter XVIII.

"You must cease protecting me, brave Northman!" said Sophie Ariele, when Gustavus offered her his arm to assist her descent from a hill on the beach to a green sheltered valley. "Cease!" she repeated gravely; "I, your rescued ladye, command you."

He bent low, humbly drawing back; and as if borne by invisible wings, she floated away to the fragrant turf pleasantly watered by a silver river. Then she sat almost exhausted upon a pilgrim's seat surrounded by flowers, and said, laughing—

"But, for heaven's sake, my bold knight and preserver, do tell me the reason that it seemed to you so very necessary to lead and assist me! For truly—if you will not interpret it wrong, which I am sure you cannot—it seemed to me that you are so exhausted after your exertions, that I can far better protect you, than you me."

"Very possibly!" said Gustavus, smiling; while he gently sank down into the fragrant grass at Sophie's feet.

But she said suddenly, glancing eagerly, almost sorrowfully around, "But I have lost one thing, nevertheless; my beautiful veil bleached in moonlight!"

"Bleached in moonlight?" returned Gustavus, dreamily; "oh yes, the same that the elves make in northern lands. The fearfully beautiful daughter of their monarch offered the knight Olaf such a handkerchief bleached in the moonlight, in token that he might command her hand in the marriage dance. Yet the knight Olaf remained faithful to his chosen bride, and the elf struck him, so that he died."

Sophie answered musingly—"Yes, it was so, indeed; it is an ancient, but very true story. But do not imagine that the elf was praised, or even excused by her tender kindred. To win a noble-hearted man, and by the priestly benediction, to gain with him a more beautiful, more imperishable life—ah, my friend, that is what a sylph or elf might well desire! But to destroy the chosen friend with deathly magical greetings, merely because he has not chosen us!—oh, shame, shame!"

Then she covered her pale little cheeks with her hands. But then again looking up she said, laughing—

"Where tarries Doctor Matthew, my chosen lord and husband? if he knew all, as the people say of doctors and professors, he ought also to know that his Sophie Ariele, carried away by corsairs, was rescued by a knightly soldier!"

With these words she extended her wonderfully beautiful hand to the warrior resting at her feet, adding with a sweet whisper—

"But now, I entreat you! give me back my veil dyed in moonlight. I know that you have it; I saw you tear it from the Turkish robber, when he sank down under your sword-blade."

At this serious prayer, Gustavus looked gently at the lady with his blue, melancholy eyes, as a clear sea which brightens before the heaven looking peacefully down upon it from above, and said—

"Now all is well! till now your veil dyed in moonlight has staunched the blood from the wound which was struck by your enemy's sword. Take it again, sweet lady. In the light of the full moon the fairies will cleanse it pure from my blood, and will make it tender and beautiful again. Oh, take it away, and hear from my dying lips the sweetest motto which now penetrates my whole existence with blessed joy: Death is Life! Oh, doubt it not, sweetest Sophie Ariele. It is certainly true!"

And, as though he would immediately seal his words by his death, he sank back on the grass, his pale face overspread with sweet smiles of joy, while with his exhausted hand he softly drew the veil from his breast, from which the purple blood was now streaming, and suffered it to gush forth at Sophie's feet. "Death is Life!" he joyfully whispered once more. Then he lay motionless, in silent, blessed forgetfulness of all the troubles of the world.

Then Sophie Ariele again pressed the veil upon his bleeding breast, and tried to quench the blood, and let her soft tears, like drops of balsam, fall in the wound of her deliverer. But the powerless youth remained silent and pale as death. In anguish she began to look around her, whispering to the cool breezes of the valley and the sea—

"Alas! and is my art ended here? For such deathly wounds of fearful weapons, neither I nor my poor little dove know any cure. Matthew, help, help!"

Chapter XIX.

And soon there stood beside them Doctor Matthew, the wise, faithful, deeply-loving physician and friend.

Drawn thither by Sophie Ariele's cry for help, after he had bravely helped to repulse the last desperate stand of the Moorish pirates, he now hastened to bind up the wounds of the brave Gustavus, and so became an assistant to the assisting.

And, perhaps, it might happen so everywhere upon earth, if every one rightly understood his power, and desired to employ it in love.

Very soon, with certain confidence, Matthew assured his rescued Ariele that he could preserve the life and health of his friend.

Concerning the manner of this cure, history is silent. It was accomplished only by surgical skill and deep medical science, and of this the muse of fabulous description has nothing further to say than—it attained its end. Her severer sister, the scientific muse, could relate far less, or rather, nothing at all, of the cure accomplished by Ariele's dove. Nevertheless, all was accomplished. Strong for action, and free from dreams; blooming with health, and clear in mind, stood Gustavus Gyllenskiold before his restoring friends to bid them adieu.

But, as it often happens in the sorrowful moment of separation, no word escaped their lips; they looked at each other with gentle glances, and had inexpressibly much to say to each other, but yet remained ever silent.

Then Sophie Ariele took up her friendly guitar, and drew from it, as if questioning, a few sweet tones, and then sang, as in answer to them, the following words:—

"Kindred of the laughing breezes,
  Sounds that wander through the air,
Sweet voiced spirits! soothe his bosom,
  Melt it, as the melted ore.
Lest too deep a mortal sadness
  Press the soul to darksome night,
The sweet muses from our sorrows;
  Out of woe awaken light;

And it sparkles, sparkles brightly,
  That was dim and dead before;
And the world, no longer troubled,
  Mirrors back heaven's smile once more:
He that truly seeks what knowledge
  Should inform the trusting mind,
Heaven's bliss mingling with earth's sorrow,
  Sunbeam ever bright shall find."

In the last lingering chord of this song, Gustavus whispered—"You wish it—you command it with sweet power, kind songstress! Therefore I will utter, as a farewell salutation, the question that sinks deepest into my earthly life—ah, yes, and it reaches also to my eternal life! Sophie Ariele, art thou an airy daughter of the firmament, a lovely cloud-image, near us everywhere, yet everywhere far away from us? or art thou a child of mortality like one of us—trembling, yet rejoicing, as we do, within the narrow bounds of an earthly life, where joy and sorrow are ever mingling, ever changing—trembling, fearing, yet joyously hoping, like we, for an eternal blessed peace, for an eternal refreshing communion which shall be hallowed by a pure, child-like innocence; trembling in our hope, I say—for our path conducts us through the grave; joyful in our fear—for that dark, nightly path guides us on to everlasting happiness? Sophie Ariele, thou beautiful, unspeakably beautiful vision, WHO ART THOU?"

Frightened at the words of his own conjuration, which so involuntarily had escaped his lips, the youth suddenly stopped. Indignant glances darted from the eyes of the physician, because a stranger (for the nearest and most deserving friend often seems as such when he meddles uncalled for in tender secrets) could dare to ask a question of his enigmatical, beautiful wife, which he had himself never found courage to ask.

But Sophie Ariele suspecting nothing of earthly confusion, laid her tender hands across each other on her bosom, raised her soft blue eyes to heaven, and whispered with a sweet voice—"He that is above knows that I am His for ever."

Involuntarily her two companions bowed low before the upward-glancing figure, and then as involuntarily grasped each other's hand. But it was not in token of reconciliation—this was not needed: it was an involuntary sign of the deepest, most blessed brotherhood.

Laughing like a child, after a few minutes of silence, Sophie Ariele said, "But it seems droll, I must acknowledge—very droll, that I know not what to think of myself, whether I am at home properly in the common real world or not. In truth, dear friends, dreams have sometimes risen up before me, that the airy castle of my parents was a sylph palace! But then I scold myself for being a little fool, and believe right well to understand that the whole phantom only springs from the wonderful stories which that faithful maiden, called Täublein, was often accustomed to chatter and to sing to me in my sleep, when a merry and sportive child. Now so much is certain, that if my parents were not sylphs, they were princes! and if they were not princes, yet," she added with mock solemnity, "I am still very high born in my paternal lofty castle." Then soon, with deep serene gravity, she said again—"All we, who are called mortals, are, in truth, very high born! altogether children of the Most High, refreshed by His heart, which is love; and preserved by His love from everlasting destruction, if we will only allow ourselves to be preserved. And our origin arises from dark, holy clouds, like the streams which spring between high rocks and the vapour of heaven; a wonderful riddle never to be understood, until it is seen in sweetly refreshing, or fearfully thundering power. Sophie Ariele is nothing fearful! Why will you torment her and yourself, by sorrowfully inquiring from whence she came? Truly she herself knows not!" she added almost mournfully, her little hands folded together across her breast. But then she took her harp, and sung solemnly, with her eyes cast up to heaven, the following words, accompanied by the chorus-like harmony of the strings—

"That which has a touch of sorrow,
  Yet rejoices Ariele's soul:
Ariele strives for what is distant
  In the heavens, and beautiful.
Where we come from, all is darkness:
  It is plain whereto we rove—
To the eternal starry brightness,
  Wherein all things live and love!

"Who that, in the night's still watches,
  Gazes on the mystic stars,
Feels not that his soul is lifted
  Far above all earthly cares?

Yet are they but glimmering shadows
Of the eternal light of love;
To the rapture-drunken spirit
Shall be given the fount above.

"We our names in words like sunbeams
Written in the heavens shall find,
If we here in lowly meekness
Love with true and faithful mind:
Though awhile in mortal sadness
Here we bear our earthly strife,
Though the world may frown upon us,
Heaven shall smile, for *Death* is *Life!*"

For the last time, while these words were dying away, she laid her hand in that of Gustavus. He breathed a soft kiss upon it; then pressed his friend to his breast, in a brotherly embrace, and hastened quickly from the room. And neither Sophie nor the physician ever saw Gustavus again with their mortal eyes.

Chapter XX.

For more than twenty years, in combat of different kinds, Colonel Gyllenskiold led an active, richly varied, and beautiful life; without once going back to the strand of Marseilles, or hearing any definite news of his kind friends who lived there. Sometimes, indeed, when flights of doves swept in joyous circles above his head for a moment he would fancy that Sophie Ariele's favourite floated with the crowd; or, perhaps, when at one time before his tent, or on the sea, close before the window of his cabin, a white dové rested, and looked in upon him with her innocent, patient eyes, kindly cooing and decking her tender feathers in the sunshine or in the silvery moonlight, then he indeed thought he beheld a messenger fom that sweet lady of Provence. But often, as such dove-teaming visions came to him, no one of them all had any message, any sign to bring for him; for, however softly and cautiously he approached them, like other wild dwellers in the air, the shy creatures instantly spread their wings and disappeared.

But what, however, never left him, was a sweet and joyful enthu-

siasm, which, like a promise of success, before such salutation of the doves, each time filled the soul of Gustavus Gyllenskiold. His soldiers, both on land and sea, had quickly remarked it. They called the doves omens of victory for their colonel; and when a little soft one was seen to hover near Gyllenskiold, the old warriors were accustomed to present their arms with particular care, admonishing their younger comrades in the well-known lines :—

> "When the dove greets Gyllenskiold,
> Then for battle thirsts Gyllenskiold ;
> The brazen die rattles and rolls—
> Rolls for victory, not for gold,
> And victory smiles on Gyllenskiold !"

One day, the bold Gustavus crossed with a frigate, in sight of an almost uninhabited island on the African coast; to this island a corsair, from whom he had rescued a French merchant-man, had fled for refuge. Gyllenskiold, terrible to the pirates above all their other enemies, determined on no account to let this destructive Moor slip a second time from his hands, and took up his station, therefore, off the entrance of the narrow cove in which he lay. Further in he could not follow him; for both the fast-closing shades of evening, and his Swedish crew's want of acquaintance with the iron-bound coast, rendered that for the present impracticable.

In the clear moonlight the frigate kept in sight of the island harbour, and the French merchantman whom she had rescued did not move from her side. Gyllenskiold imputed this solely to the wish of her captain that she should not remain in this dangerous region without the protection of the Swedish man-of-war; and he had already made a resolution, after he should have completely gained the victory, of accompanying his protegée to some Spanish or Portuguese seaport-town. The boat which he had dispatched with this message, and with the question how far the merchantman would wish for his guidance, brought the answer back—"Home to Marseilles !"

Gyllenskiold's heart beat high at this answer, and higher still when some Marseillan youths, armed, came on board, singing one of those joyous battle songs which had been often sung in their military exercises on the coasts of Provence; and when, as the leader of these brave strangers, stood before him one who would have been

more properly called a boy than a man: something in his pleasing countenance reminded Gustavus of Sophie Ariele's feminine softness, something also of the physician's bold, manly strength; but he resembled much more the former than the latter. Yes, it was in truth Sophie's and Doctor Matthew's joyous son, who was travelling on a journey from Marseilles, and who now with generous courage had persuaded the captain of the trader to allow him, with one or two other companions who were equally disposed for the enterprise, to strengthen the crew of their preserver.

Gustavus Gyllenskiold, in the midst of his joy at this happy meeting, was terrified at the thought that the blooming youth, by an unseen higher Providence, might be torn away from his side in the approaching deadly combat. And then the piteous lamentations of Sophie Ariele, and the deep mourning of the hospitable physician, filled the soul of their former guest; and with an eloquence that the brave soldier till now, perhaps, had never used even to urge his companions to arms, he strove to deter the dear youth from the approaching battle. But he felt the current of his well-meaning words soon checked by an indignant glance from the youth, and still more by the question—

"How is this? My father and my mother have often spoken with approving words of your noble enthusiasm in war; and now by such petty fears would you dissuade my parent's only son from a feat of arms that might bring him honour? That would seem very unlike you. But pardon me, Sir Colonel, that noble fire which sparkles from your eyes at my too hasty language assures me to whom I am come, to the Colonel Gustavus Gyllenskiold! Your earnest dissuasions had almost made me err. Indeed, the boldness with which you loosed our ship from the corsair, and turned the tables upon him in his turn, this might have—this should have—"

But his voice had become every moment softer, and, notwithstanding all his efforts to prevent it, every moment more faltering, as Gyllenskiold's searching and glowing eyes met his. He grew quite silent before this kind but earnest glance, and thought to himself, "Ah! truly; with my too forward boldness I have destroyed one of the dearest joys of my life. For I can plainly see, that, for my presumption and disrespect, he will not take me with him to the attack upon the rocky island."

And as if Gustavus had perceived the thoughts of the youth, he answered him — "You shall, notwithstanding, go with us, dear boy." But in the joy which lighted up all the features of the youth was mingled an expression of indignant pride, and he murmured—

"Boy! That is a name I have not been accustomed to hear for many a long day. Pardon me, sir, for what I say. My Christian name is Gustavus, and after you I have the honour of being so christened. A long year indeed it was after you went away from Marseilles, that I came into the world; yet the fame of the many beautiful, knightly deeds of the noble Gustavus Gyllenskiold oftentimes reached it; and so my parents thought, and indeed with good truth, that they could provide me no more noble incentive for a glorious career than if they christened me after their noble guest, Gustavus. May I request, sir, that you will in future call me by this honourable name?"

"Right willingly, from my heart, my brave Gustavus!" said Gyllenskiold, deeply moved, as he pressed him in his arms.

And now they sat together at the joyous evening meal, liberal as the ship's fare could well afford; and Gyllenskiold said, "I must show you, Gustavus, that I have learnt something of entertainment under the pleasantly hospitable roof of your parents; or perhaps not under their roof, for our most happy meal-times we passed in your garden by the sea, and spent there certainly our most refreshing hours."

Then it seemed to the heart of Gyllenskiold, moved by many sweet emotions, that he was again indeed at Marseilles, in the garden of Doctor Matthew. There lay the ship, now at anchor, as still and firm as a sea-coast rooted by imperishable rocks, and the waves splashed and bubbled against it as against a peaceful shore.

Gyllenskiold could not refrain from asking the youth about his parental dwelling; and as, with that peculiar clearness of remembrance which is common to all, or at least to the most part of north countrymen, he dwelt on the peculiarities of Doctor Matthew's home and economy of life, the young Gustavus felt himself transported back to that sweet place and all his earliest remembrances. As he was once describing one of his boyish battles, and the provocation which had caused it, he suddenly stopped short; a slight blush of

embarrassment passed over his cheeks; yet soon, as if laughing at himself, he added joyfully—

"Would you believe it possible, Colonel?—nevertheless it is quite true—that my quarrel with my schoolfellow arose entirely, because the foolish boy maintained that my dear, beautiful mother was, in reality, not a child of earth, but, as he was pleased to express it, only a mere spirit of the air. I was left conqueror in the contest, and willingly forgave him from my heart all the pain he had caused me, and ever since then we have loved each other dearly; and he is here also upon your noble ship, the dearest and bravest of all my companions. But, strange as it may seem, it is also true, dear sir, that some quite grown-up people in Marseilles have also taken it into their head that my mother was originally a spirit of the air; and is only by marriage with my father connected with this earthly life."

The boy had scarcely said this than he shrank back, seized by a peculiar shudder, and whispered, "What was that?"

It was nothing more than a white dove, which hovered about them in soft, scarcely audible flutterings; then quickly ascending, disappeared in the feeble starlight of the darkling heaven.

Blushing, the youth said, "You will argue nothing in my favour from this strange trembling, Colonel. To-morrow, among the firing of guns and clashing of swords, I will show no signs of fear; but this white dove came before my eyes so strangely. These beautiful white birds are always especially fostered by my parents, and it is for this reason that my mother by some people is thought to be a spirit of the air. It is true they have one other reason for supposing so, but it might seem like boasting or pride in me, if I were to tell it to you."

"Never mind; but tell me, dear Gustavus!" said Gyllenskiold, "you need fear nothing of that kind from me."

"Be it so," exclaimed the youth, joyfully; "I will not, then, conceal from you that my mother still blooms as before, in the almost childlike beauty of spring. Often, in my boyish years, she seemed to me to be my playfellow; and now as my sister, even as my younger sister. There may be many autumnal and winterly souls which do not understand this beautiful freshness; and while some have said that my beautiful mother is like the ever-reviving

breeze of spring, that grows not old, others have looked upon her entirely as a spirit of the air."

At these words he laughed heartily; but again a white dove flew near him, and he bent low to it, full of grave emotion, and whispered—"If thou belongest truly to the band of my mother's doves, greet Sophie Ariele with kind flutterings of thy wing, as a salutation from her Gustavus, and also from the brave Colonel Gyllenskiold."

Chapter XXI.

Deeply moved by these words of his young fellow-soldier, the noble Swede soon saw him sink into a tranquil slumber; his gentle form breathing silently, as in the bosom of the sweetest peace. And now how very like, when the fire of his eye, which he inherited from his father, was hidden beneath the covering of his soft eyelid, and no proudly indignant or boldly laughing emotion passed over his tenderly chiselled lips—now how inexpressibly and affectingly was he like his mother!

"Oh! may God guard thee, and for her sake preserve thee on the morrow," said the Colonel, softly; and spread his mantle carefully over the slumbering youth.

At this moment the boy became disturbed. At length, overpowered with the deep sleep of childhood, he stammered the words, "Mother!" and "Father!" and "Good night." And then added, more placidly, "Let me now have my sleep out quietly. Tomorrow, indeed, the Colonel shall teach me the solemn sentence; but it is quite right to sleep well, long, and peacefully before a solemn lesson. Is it not?"

And thereupon he stretched himself at length, and lay, as the moon shed her pale beams upon him, like a marble statue at his friend's feet.

Gyllenskiold felt tears flow over his cheeks, and murmured, as he raised his eyes and thoughts to Heaven—"Oh! thou all-merciful, turn away the solemn words, before which my soul trembles! In-

deed, indeed : *Death is Life.* But, ah! for this blooming angel-boy; earthly life is, as yet, so beautiful, so lovely!—"

Here one of his officers entered, with a message of importance; and Gyllenskiold felt himself cheerfully enlivened by the expectation of the morrow's battle and triumph. His alarm about the solitary youth faded before his eager anxiety for the management of the combat. He launched a boat immediately, that he might prove with his own eyes the truth of the intelligence he had heard; and, in company with a few chosen and fully armed soldiers, steered to the bushy promontory, to fix on a good place to make the attack on the morrow.

The rocky coasts lay fearfully still before them, surrounded and danced over by the foamy heads of the breakers. Relying securely on their watchful sentinels, the wearied pirates had almost all of them fallen into the deepest sleep. Groups of dark figures could be easily discovered through the clearness of the night, as they were stretched upon the slopes or summits of the lofty hills of the island. A few sentinels were standing here and there, but they were also weary, and leant carelessly upon their arms, so that they seemed rather to be resting than watching. Meanwhile the roaring of the breakers completely drowned the sound made by the oars of their approaching enemy; while, at the same time, the towering clouds of spray, and, in some degree also, the close, leafy underwood of the headland, continued to conceal them from sight.

The boat thus landed unnoticed, and scarcely had Gyllenskiold with his quick glance marked the favourable position of the place, than he immediately sent back the light boat, in order that, by quick passages to and fro, it might fetch over as many of the crew as possible before break of dawn; for he had resolved, if it were practicable, to spare his frigate the danger of sailing among the shallows of a bay so little known. In vain did his soldiers implore him to go back again now to the ship, and return with the last division, and then, without needlessly compromising his safety, to lead the united force to victory. He looked at them, as if blaming them for supposing that he would do so; "Yet," he added, kindly, "I thank you for having reminded me of the last division—with this, and on no account sooner—Hearken, my friends, who are now about to steer back to the ship;

remember what I say, and perform it faithfully. On no account whatever let the young Frenchman, who joined us from the Marseillan ship, come over before the last time. This is my express command, let him and his bold companions object as they please."

And now with a perfectly light heart—for he hoped that all danger would be over before the arrival of the last company—full of secret yet brave delight, he ordered everything for the approaching decisive combat.

But scarcely had the boat deposited two of its little cargoes upon the shore, and had pushed off from the land, in order to return for a third, than a gun from one of the sentinel Swedes sounded through the silent night, and the winding cliffs of the island re-echoed it again and again. In a moment the Moorish robbers could be seen upon the hills, aroused from their slumber, seizing their weapons, and arranging themselves in order for battle; so that a sudden attack on the part of the few who had landed—and Gyllenskiold, for one moment, did entertain that idea—would be nothing but to leap from despair into utter destruction. No course, therefore, was left him to pursue, but to conceal, as long as possible, the small number of his followers among the bushes on the shore, until there was a chance they might receive sufficient reinforcements from the ship.

The shrubs and trees on the strand favoured this design, and the quiet, cool valour of the northern soldiers led them still to hope for a prosperous issue. The first wild attack of the pirates was completely repulsed, and before the well-aimed guns and pistols of the Swedes a considerable number of Musselmen, either dead or severely wounded, covered the field, while the principal part collected on the hill to prepare for a fresh attack. That this fresh attack must take place was beyond all doubt, for the pirates must, by this partly won victory, have discovered the only possible way that remained for the preservation of their bold enemies; for when the clear moonlight should discover to the terrified sentinels how slowly, and with how few men the boat would steer through the breakers, it was certain that they would immediately, with all the force of despair, attack the soldiers who were already landed.

Calmly considering all these disadvantages, Gyllenskiold angrily walked up to the sentinel, inquiring from him the cause of the

foolish alarm gun. The bearded soldier calmly replied—"Colonel, for that you must not chide me. It was no Moorish enemy, but a friend from the ancient heroes of bygone days, come perhaps to call you and me, and our companions, home to those blessed halls above; and would not you, my brave Colonel, gladly receive so solemn, yet so welcome a message?"

Gyllenskiold bent his proud head affirmatively, and the Swede related his official news in the following words:—

"From the foamy waves you see yonder, sprang up what seemed to be the heads of men, but not as if they were swimming, but walking upright through the waves, as reapers marching through high luxuriant corn; they came through the breakers that every moment foamed more wildly, and mingled with them were heads of women, with cheeks of grizzly red—how hideous in the pale moonlight! and there were heroes of noble bearing, with crowns on their heads—"

"I know them! I know them!" said Gyllenskiold, with difficulty repressing the shudder that passed through his inmost senses. "You need not, at such a moment, describe merely unsubstantial dreams!"

But the Swede interrupted haughtily—"In good truth, Colonel, you do me wrong: I have neither slept nor dreamed, but watched at my post as beseems an honourable warrior of our north country to do. And if at first I imagined the heads in the waves to be ghostly inhabitants of the world of spirits, yet I soon became aware that they were not mere shadowy forms. Erect and kinglike, one of the crown-bearers came walking to the land. He had a deep wound in the breast. He stood opposite to me, and bent his head—whether to me, or to some one else, or to us all, I do not rightly know; but I presented my weapon to him, as to a royal personage whether living or dead. That he did not belong to the Saracens you might be perfectly certain, if you only once looked into his large rolling blue eyes. But when he moved on, as though he would pass my post, I lowered my weapon and said, 'Stop, if it please your majesty, the soldier must fulfil his duty. Give me the password, or I must fire!' Then he laid his hand on his ponderous sword, and advanced with giant strides. I fired! and like a flash of lightning, or a sweeping sword-stroke, it lighted the empty

space around me. Then the kingly form smiled as he floated away upon a snow-white steed (when or from whence the noble creature came I know not), and beckoned kindly to me, as if he would say, 'Come joyfully after me, you will have many good companions.' And how, I ask you, could a faithful soldier upon watch act otherwise than I have done? If any one was to blame, it was the old crowned hero; and you and I, my Colonel, and perhaps indeed many more among us, may call upon him to answer to the charge, before the sun rises over these southern waves."

"That is probable!" said Gyllenskiold, thoughtfully; "the Moors upon the hills are gathering in stronger and better arranged order."

Once more Gyllenskiold glanced towards the ship, as if, by a rapid movement, it was possible she might yet release him from the threatening overwhelming force of the enemy. But her befriending form rocked peacefully in the moonlight, and sail and pennant drooped sleepily from the spars. A perfect calm paralysed all her movements. Then over Gyllenskiold's lips passed the tune of a song, the first lines of which, when a boy, he had heard sung with peculiar emotion:—

> "Bravely are we called to die,
> And not to be deceived by hope!"

Loud and joyfully he called to his Swedes—"Bravely are we called to die!" and resolutely they returned the salute, and pressed close together, man to man; a noble band united in the brotherhood of death. The Saracens descended slowly and deliberately from the hill, their two wings stretching forward in overwhelming force, so that the whole body wore the appearance of their own banner of victory, the crescent, which rose proudly in the midst.

One more look, as taking leave of Ariele's son, Gyllenskiold turned towards his ship; and, in the hope that he might once more see the beloved form of the youth, he raised to his eyes a glass given him by Farenberg, and constructed purposely for sea voyages. Then suddenly a form appeared on the edge of the ship, in a white flying mantle; it was the same white mantle with which he had before covered the slumbering Gustavus; and, as if with wings, the vision stretched forward. "The boy will throw himself into the sea, in order to reach the shore!" thought Gyllenskiold,

terrified; "a practised swimmer in the prime of manhood would never make the passage hither. And then the breakers! And if he got through *them*—to meet a bloody death here on land." Still the youth seemed to wish to spring into the water, but he was prevented by those around him: he struggled angrily to free himself from their hold. Suddenly he raised both hands, as if he were vehemently imploring the silent night-heaven; and lo, the pennant of the ship began to fly, the sails to swell in the favouring breeze, the busy crowd on the deck to increase. Then the frigate rocked in the rising wind of the early dawn; and, rapidly advancing to the scene of combat, it thundered a cannonade of shot into the wing of the advancing Saracens. Howling, the broken lines fell back one upon the other. "Forward!" cried Gyllenskiold, exultingly, as he rushed with his Swedes from the bushy strand, and put their terrified enemies to an irretrievable rout.

Chapter XXII.

The battle was completely over. The pirate ship had been taken, its crew were either killed or dispersed. But in vain did the Swedes seek for their brave leader, in vain did the youths of Marseilles seek for their brave comrade Gustavus. Could the two have perished in some way together? If so, the victory over these hordes of barbarians would seem indeed to be most dearly purchased.

Notwithstanding all the inquiries that were made for the noble friends, no farther trace of them could be discovered than that the youth Gustavus, after he had caused the ship to enter the bay by his strange invocation of the breezes, had thrown himself overboard full of mad desire for the combat, and reached the land. Some declared they had seen his white mantle again after that fluttering among a crowd of Moorish figures. But the exact place of this encounter, after the tumult of the nightly battle, and in the silence of the rising morning, they did not remember sufficiently well to find again. Gyllenskiold had been seen for the last time

by his Swedes, rushing with sudden and to them incomprehensible madness down a steep precipice after a number of the flying enemy, so that it was not clear whether he had fallen or leapt. By the time his less adventurous followers had gained the level beach below, he and his adversaries had entirely disappeared. It almost seemed as if the surf had washed them away together.

A low sobbing sound of lamentation, almost like that of a softly weeping boy, who had only just ended his first angry, sorrowful burst of passion, at length drew the eager soldiers to a place on the woody shore, where traces of blood on the boughs indicated a hardly fought battle, that was indeed scarcely over. Somewhat further, two Moors lay dead on the sand, their heads cleft in twain. After a few steps to the nearest winding of the cliff, the Swedes found their noble leader, at least his corpse, with a fearful wound upon his valiant breast, pouring out his heart's blood.

It was affecting to behold how the young Marseillais, Gustavus, supported his sinking head, and shed besides such hot, scalding tears; while a snowy-haired old sailor, looking on in silence, sat with folded hands at the feet of the departed hero.

The boy cried, full of lamentation, to the newly arrived soldiers—"Ah! woe is me; mine is the fault! It was in rescuing me, that the pious, generous knight fell. Oh, what a cursed zeal was it that drove me from the ship, and made me swim to shore! Here two Moors halted in their flight, and rushed in wild fury against me, intending to make my death an offering to their revenge. Alas! would that they had accomplished their angry purpose! I lay already spent upon the ground, and only gave faint blows, that fell rather in the air than upon my enemies (beetles, overpowered by ants, struggle thus in the empty rage of despair), when suddenly, from the neighbouring cliffs, my noble godfather, Gustavus Gyllenskiold, saw my distress; and, like a gloriously winged messenger of heaven, he flew down upon my foes, and laid them low in the sand upon the shore;—they must be still lying there;—but when he turned towards me—oh, horror!—then I saw that his garment and breast were dyed with the terrible wound which he had received in the battle for my preservation; and here he now lies! and here he will now die!"

He began again silently to weep, and one of the soldiers, who had just arrived, said somewhat roughly, and unfeelingly—

"Yes, indeed, that is what we get by it! Here he lies now, and here he dies, and our loss is and always will be the greatest. Would that the French rascal had remained altogether upon his Marseilles ship! We should then have had our beloved, noble colonel still safe and sound among us."

And the poor lamenting youth only began to weep still more heartily and despairingly. But then the silver-haired sailor at Gyllenskiold's feet arose, and said reprovingly to his angry fellow-soldier—

"You—take heed! What you have said was not exactly the best thing that you could have said—throughout, it was not well! God forbid that our dear, dying Colonel should be aware of this; else you have given pain to his departing hero's soul; and look! a painful quiver about his mouth makes me almost fear that it is so; so I will speak in his stead—will speak such words as would flow from his brave soul, and would be proper for the protection and happiness of this noble boy. Where would have been our brave Colonel without him? Where should all we, who first landed upon the island, have been without him? Stretched out upon the earth ye would be lying, like those bloody Moors; or shackled, you would have been gnashing your teeth, or groaning in the power of the pirates. For, while the calm held us bound with our ship in idle view of your combat and your distress, this wonderful boy called on the breezes to swell our sails, and they obeyed his voice, and carried us softly and swiftly towards the shore, so that we could easily fire upon your overpowering enemy!"

All looked astonished at the youth; but he, drying his tears, and pushing his fair locks from his open brow, said just as astonished, "What then do you expect to find so strange in me? You are in error; I have indeed invoked the breezes, invoked them full of the deepest, most fervent anguish of soul; but that their spirits heard, or at any rate answered to my call, of that I know nothing. I pray you do not perplex me by such wonderful words, which even in my earliest childhood flitted about me deceivingly, and which now in my deep, deep anguish of soul, occur to me again. Truly I am no fickle child of the breezes; alas, if it were so, would the death-wounds of this dying hero cause me such un-

speakable sorrow?" And again he wept bitterly; and, pushing away from his forehead and temples the golden locks that fell over them, he bent his blooming face over the quiet and motionless one of his friend.

The old north-country man then said, "Whether consciously or unconsciously he holds such strange dominion over the elements, matters but little; to me it certainly appeared that it was at the fairy call of this youth that our sails swelled. And were it not so, it was still *his* words of fire, *his* noble earnest prayers, *his* rapid and animating signs, lightening us all up like a flashing meteor—above all, it was *his* wonderful *power*, which inspired the dullest and most anxious among us with hope to venture everything and strength to perform it, and urged us to run our ship into the dangerous bay, and to preserve our heroic Colonel, and you all. *That* is what this boy has done!"

They all bent with one accord before the weeping youth; but he said, looking up most sorrowfully, "Yes; would that it had been an act of preservation, then it might have passed for something honourable. But there he lies, alas! and there he dies!"

"*Death is Life!*" said Gyllenskiold, once more unclosing his eyes in inexpressible serenity to the light of an earthly day; and turning to the youth, he continued in a firm and solemn voice, "See, my young Gustavus; now everything is clear to me. I saw in my last dream your dear parents, and they declared to me what you should learn from me before you go forth upon your journey. The sentence might indeed have sounded too solemn, in the moment of separation, for them to have spoken it to thee, although it is in reality a sentence full of gladness; they referred you therefore to me. Oh, my young friend, in a fearfully dark path of error I entered your parents' house for the first time. '*Life is Death!*' cried for ever the horrible visions of my decaying, dreamily darkening existence. '*Life is Life!*' the sweetly peaceful days at Marseilles taught me. But in *one* infinitely more blessed hour there, I laid hold of a far higher truth. '*Death is Life!*' I then could say, and '*Death is Life!*' your beautiful mother sang to me, full of inspiration, at the moment when we separated; and now to you, sweet Gustavus, yet in the bright spring-time of your earthly life, now when I am dying, I can say to you, with the transporting assurance in my soul, '*Death is Life!*'

Not that, dear fresh blooming youth, the joys of thy life should sink for that reason towards the grave. No; but in order that they may rise more swiftly to heaven, and may shine the more brightly in the blissful certainty that—*there is no death.* Lo! the solemn messenger we are accustomed to call by that name comes to me, and my sinking eyes fail before his heavenly glance; this earthly world of dreams disappears; and deep, deep within, the holy light from the divine throne shines full upon me; secretly, quite secretly, it glimmered in me before. How strangely till now the shadows of dreams have hidden and concealed it! What will it now signify whether in this ever-changing, enigmatic world we have borne crowns or garlands, a shepherd's cap or a beggar's hood?

"The old crown-bearer indeed beckons kindly to me from above. But as long as I remained here in this dark world of dreams I misunderstood him; he meant by his signs to point to a far different, a far richer crown. And the spirit of the air! Oh, Sophie Ariele, thou lovely, wise confidant of heaven! how clearly thou saidst we were very high-born! We are all watered by the blessed fountains of the highest love!"

And *Love* was his last breath. He lay a beautiful corpse, smiling sweetly under the brightly beaming light of morning, and the flowing waves of the sea sang a soft lullaby to the last slumber of their friend. "And Love," so the young Gustavus felt it breathe through his soul, moved by the sweetest sorrow, "love shall sound as the first jubilee of the departed warrior in the eternal halls of victory!"

* * * * *

After the interval of some years, when Ariele's son brought home this solemn news, Doctor Matthew, as soon as his weighty business permitted, erected a monument to Gyllenskiold's memory at the place in the garden where the three united souls had often felt together a happy participation of joyful emotions. The emblem and motto he required and obtained from Sophie Ariele; and at her desire he ornamented the monument of his friend with the figure, in raised alabaster work of a dove, flying from out a sea of flame towards heaven, with the inscription—

"Death is Life."

THE

Christmas Tree.

IN a mountain village, not far from a large and populous commercial town, the elderly wife of a worthy retired merchant was sitting one afternoon of a Christmas Eve, spinning at the window. As she turned her little wheel, she revolved, in thought, the cycle of the past, and joined, on the extended thread, one departed year to another. In this manner many a Christmas festival again set up its little light before her; while that of to-day awaited only, as formerly, the flash of joy by which it should be kindled. "It was, then, alas! another time," she sighed, as, raising her eyes from her work, and to avoid the afflicting retrospect, she looked forth upon the garden; but a heavy fleece of snow, pressed down by thawing, watery vapours, had fallen without, and lay along the earth, giving it no robe of cheerful whiteness, but rather one of sullied moisture, as its festal garb. The good woman let fall her thread, and still moving the wheel mechanically with her foot, folded her arms, leant back in her low-cushioned chair, and cast her thoughts and eye over the garden-hedge, towards the churchyard wall, that sheltered the grave of a little maiden who had died in childhood. She said nothing, and might, perhaps, have had only indistinct thoughts; yet she felt a heavy melancholy.

Solitary tears ran down her cheeks, and quite obliterated all images of Christmas joy.

But it was the heavy pressure with which the presence of an only son, who, dragged from his early career in life, had become a prey to sickness, that chiefly burthened her. When yet almost a boy, he had been drawn away, by some auxiliaries, to the French army; and now, nipped in his bloom, weary and wasted, was sent back again to his paternal home. It was true his youthful nature seemed now slowly to revive; but the genuine activity, the energy which resists and overcomes opposition, that power, she was obliged to confess, might never, or only through long, considerate care, be again with difficulty restored. And what would be the end of the slippery course of his mistaken life? whither would it lead? Outgrown as to his earlier pursuits, spoiled for bodily exertion, for mental unfitted, who would support the helpless one, when his father's eyes should be closed, or her busy hands no more be able to ply their accustomed labour? She had now trouble enough to maintain the tottering household, and since the ravages of the war, the slender income had already been too scant, for her to think of any saving for the forlorn one's future condition. "It is a misfortune," her husband was accustomed to reply to similar complaints; "but it must be borne." She had also heard, on the previous Sunday, an excellent discourse on the text—"Be not anxious for the coming morrow." Her heart had thereby been comforted, and made more trustful. On returning from the church, she had gratefully pressed her husband's hand, and with the courage of inspiration, had spoken of overcoming present sorrows, and of her confidence in better days. But that which then raised her spirits, though it had not altogether vanished, had yet been interrupted and weakened by numberless daily trials.

"He has well spoken," thought she, resting her head upon her hand. "It is for me to endure; and the hour may yet come when the burden will be reckoned to me yet more heavy and oppressive. Still we are bidden to be of cheerful heart—'He who clothes and cherishes the lilies of the field, and the fowls of heaven, has also for thee and thine warm winter raiment and sustenance; and besides, a joyful day in store, when it shall be needed.' Yes, yes," she sighed, shaking her head, "there, in my husband's chamber above, which

no one approaches within ten paces, where neither question nor complaint intrudes, where it is warm and still and lonely, there also abides the soul, tranquil and retired; and whatever storm bursts in upon it, it can also, by itself, contend with: but here, below, all that is painful and trying has to be accomplished." While thus gradually yielding to disquiet, her sadness was interrupted by the approach of her sickly son: she heard him cough while yet at the threshold. The sound, to-day, seemed to her more hollow than formerly. Her bosom was painfully agitated: anxiously she beheld his sorrowful figure, as he entered, reflected in a looking-glass opposite the door. Yet she forbore to look on himself, as her observant glance was ever sensitive of his presence; and in order to appear less anxious, she turned herself towards the window, at the same time exclaiming, "Old Martha's gay mantle flutters about her so widely in the snow-storm, as if she were hurrying with something wonderful."

The young man, who had also gone up to the window, replied, "Does the robust old woman still carry the letters round the mountains?"

"Certainly, certainly," said his mother. "Yes," she continued, smiling, "here may be seen how one's humour fashions things in one's-self and others. At the time thou wert absent, when I saw between the bushes the tip of the mantle glimmering down the hill-path, my heart beat so violently, as if—God forgive me—Providence itself were deciding on our weal and woe. Now, Martha is to me—just as she is—only a letter-carrier, who can neither give me much, nor take away." She said the last words with a careless tone and demeanour, whilst the thought arose in her with strange vividness—"What if the post should bring me, to-day, something very pleasing and agreeable! Perhaps, some quite unexpected, joyful intelligence!" She had no conception of what it might be that should so nearly concern her from afar; but the thought, undefined as it was, served to quicken her imagination with unusual activity.

"Dear mother," rejoined her son, whom her expressions had arrested, "the future is a secret for every one: man often knows not how much he expects from it, but, in the end, all hope for the best. He who looks into it otherwise, does but plunge into a bottomless abyss.

It affected the agitated lady indescribably, to hear him so speak of the future. Whom did he mean? his nearest kindred on earth, or another, who perhaps lay nearer to him than he was conscious of? "Benjamin!" she softly said, seizing and anxiously pressing his hand.

He might well have felt what she was not able to express; he, however, let it remain so, and, in order to divert her attention, hastily inquired, "What does busy Martha do there over the narrow bridge, at the little ruined shepherd's hut? I think it stands empty; at least I am told so."

"In that you have been rightly informed," responded his mother. "After the death of old David, who would not leave the decaying cottage, no one has again occupied it. But who knows whether the dexterous woman may not there have discovered a little corner for the more convenient bestowal of some of the articles she brings with her, until she has finished her rounds? Such people understand well how to make use of every thing. I should like to know, however," she continued inquisitively, "what she really purposes." Here she paused, as she attentively looked in the specified direction; while Benjamin, tired, and having no particular sympathy for the mysterious village incident, seated himself in an arm-chair. "How, by accident, one thing springs out of another!" resumed his mother, after a while. "See! Benjamin, I look many times a day towards the bridge, and beyond it; must look thither, if I only direct my eyes on the road. I do so, and think nothing of it; but to-day, old stories, long banished from my thoughts, come again to me, to make my heart still sadder, and this holy eve, which should be for all one of joy, more lonesome and melancholy. Thou understandest well what I mean," she added, wiping away a tear.

"No!" replied her son, astonished, and vainly endeavouring to realize the import of her words.

"No?" inquired she, wondering. "But," she continued, "I know that the loss of the good and beautiful Anna cannot affect thy heart as it does mine. She was still a child when thou leftest thy paternal home; and when also thou taughtest her to read and write, and wast so glad that we stood to the poor orphan in her parents' room, thou wast yet a wayward boy, and sawest little of the timid child. Afterwards, when she was so unaccount-

ably lost to us, thou wast far away, and time, and the many new events of the present, have all too much effaced the distant images for thee now to have any particular recollection of them."

"Yet, yet!" said the young man, striving, as well as he was able, to recall what he had forgotten, "I very distinctly remember the pretty child, whom you as tenderly cherished as if she were your own. Ah, yes!" he added, with animation, "I was then fourteen years old, when I went to my uncle's residence, in order to attend school, and Anna might have been eight or nine. Since then, indeed, I have not again been here. First came my removal, then my studies, afterwards service in the army. A broad gulf lies between now and then."

"Therefore it is," replied his mother, resuming the thread of her contemplations, "that thou canst not at all sympathize with me in the sentiments which yonder little hut awakens."

"I have ever forborne," replied Benjamin, calmly, "to ask you of the minuter circumstances of the poor orphan's disappearance, from unwillingness to revive painful recollections in your soul."

"Kind son!" she smiled, with emotion, as with one hand she wiped the tears from her cheeks, and extended the other towards him.

He kissed her hand, and said—"Yet tell me, dear mother, if it will not pain you, how came Anna to forsake you?"

"Forsake! Benjamin," exclaimed his mother, sensitively; "she did not forsake us; she was torn from us—that I shall ever believe. But who they were that dealt us the blow—How crafty villains have contrived to keep the wicked deed so long concealed that is known to God only, who, in due time, will yet bring all to light; but this much I tell thee, that, from the first moment, the child clung to me even as the ivy that creeps on yonder wall. I know too well that her heart was rent asunder when they dragged her away from hence."

"Dragged away?" asked the young man, incredulously. "Have you then any trace that such a deed of violence was done?"

"No trace," she replied, vehemently; "yet sooner would we that the mystery were unexplained than mistrust a faithful heart. See! my dear," she continued, "as when I first beheld Anna's open countenance, and a voice spoke within me, 'In her there is no guile,' so she still remains ever before me, and no one shall be able to dis-

figure or pervert the image. There," she proceeded, turning herself nearer to the window, and tapping, with extended finger against the panes, "there, upon the narrow plank, sat the forlorn child, careless and cracking nuts, as contented as if the world were hers, whilst I went carrying to the dying grandfather his final meal. I was startled when I cast my eyes upon her; for before I had never seen her, nor even known of her existence. As I was now about crossing the bridge, and she kept running on, and then sitting down in my way, I stopped and accosted her. She raised up her head, shook the long fair ringlets from her brow, and fixing her large eyes confidingly upon me, smiled, and reaching forth her delicate little hand, offered me of her store of nuts, which she had previously taken from her pocket. I thanked her for the present, and inquired who she was, and whence she came; whereupon, abashed, she muttered something half-aloud between her lips, drew up her little feet, and hastened away. I gazed after her; she so moved me, I knew not what to think of her. Perhaps, I thought, she might belong to the old shepherd, who, from kindness, had lately brought her hither. But what would become of the fair violet amid the matted moss? it would surely be stifled. As thus thinking, I entered the little room, and said, 'Good day, father,' and having set on the table the little provision I had brought, I sat down by the side of the sick man's bed. 'He sleeps well!' I said, softly, and remained quiet a while. I wished to wait till he should open his eyes, and observe me; but his slumber lasted long, while my heart throbbed with anguish; every moment I became more uneasy. I then glanced round upon the walls, for I did not trust myself to look upon the sleeper beside me. Above the bed hung the shepherd's wallet, and by the side stood his tall staff, at the lower end bound with iron, while from its top a long, faded ribbon rolled down to the grey-headed man's pillow. There he lay stretched out at his length, his white hair and silvery beard gently quivering as he softly drew his breath. The silk band on the staff was now stirred by a rush of wind from the opened door, as the little one entered. She timidly remained standing behind the old man's bed, while I beckoned her cautiously to approach; but my care was superfluous. The locks around the chin and temples quivered no more; all was now over, the honest shepherd had ceased to live.

A shudder went through my soul; I took the child by the hand, and led her to our home. Afterwards I learnt that the poor child was an orphan, sent hither from a distant village, where her grandfather still lived, who should have released the parish from the obligation of bringing her up. This duty we now undertook, and never regretted it, till the day that her absence so wounded our hearts; then I thought if I had never seen her, I should not now have to bewail her. But I only punished myself with such thoughts; and so severe, Benjamin, were thy father's reproofs, that I shed almost as many tears on their account as for our loss. However, I did not long remain idle; I searched and inquired, hither and thither, promising thanks and reward to any one who would give me intelligence, but none I gained, more than I already knew.

The fair maiden had not, in truth, bloomed unobserved upon our mountains; and Anna was obliged for weeks together to keep within the threshold, from fear of a tall, slim, sallow captain of Dragoons, who followed her about at every step. At last her tormentor left the neighbourhood; and in order, after so much disquiet, to give the poor child some recreation, thy father took her with him on a journey to the neighbouring city. He took her with him, Benjamin, but he did not bring her back."

Thus she ended; sighing deeply at the painful remembrance.

Her son, who had listened with fixed attention to the end of her story, now asked impatiently how it had happened, and what had befallen his father, that he so lost the object of his care. But his mother could tell him no more than that both had arrived together at the harbour, and there saw the merchantmen lying at anchor. His father described to the observant maiden the pleasures of a sea-voyage, and the intercourse of various nations. Anna listened to him very attentively, and remained constantly by his side. But it happened that some negro boys, belonging to the ships, sprang ashore, thereby causing a tumult and outcry among the children of the town. The throng and pressure became so great that each one was obliged to stop and look before him. At this moment the pastor, for Anna's better protection, grasped her hand; but he suddenly lost her, and she vanished from his sight. He called her, he cried aloud, and worked his way after her through the crowd; but all in vain, she was lost.

"Unaccountable!" replied Benjamin, deep in thought, and meditating on the incident; while his mother, already diverted to another subject by the approach of the nimble Martha, was attentively watching whether, to-day, no joyful message should be brought to her.

"Now surely!" she exclaimed, "old Martha is passing us by. Ah! I thought the days of good fortune had long since gone from us. On our night no joyful ray is to shine, Benjamin!" she added with suppressed voice, amid stifled tears. "Thy father's books from the reading-club are all that she is giving in such haste to the maid; nothing else, nothing for us!"

"What else dost thou expect?" inquired her husband, now entering, as he set down on the table his lamp, which, as it was dark, he had carried in his hand; at the same time, with a countenance unusually bright and joyful, approaching her.

"Ah nothing," she replied, with an air cold and constrained. She avoided looking at him, from fear of betraying the involuntary emotions of her heart; she therefore rose from her seat, and pushed the spinning-wheel, with more than needful precision, into its place.

"Nothing!" he repeated calmly. "Now I know that thou wert looking out upon the road towards some one."

"That was only a thought," she replied.

"But thoughts have their foundation," he smiled. "They come to us not for nothing and in vain. I venture to think that the Holy Eve has also hallowed thy heart, and that pious images, full of happy fulfilment, have arisen upon thy soul." The excited and agitated woman here held her apron to her eyes, and wept vehemently, without having power to answer, though she wished to do so. Sympathizingly, her husband seized her hand. For a while he was silent, as if he wished for time to collect himself; then, gently rebuking, he said, "Oh, if you would only have confidence in God!" She let fall the apron from her eyes, raised them towards heaven, and exclaimed with conscious agony, "Oh, I have held fast, and still hold fast my trust. But —"

"But what?" inquired he, earnestly.

She heeded him not, but continued passionately, "I am not unbelieving. No! I do not doubt God's almighty power. But he

will pardon his weak creature, who, amid the pressure of accumulated trials, groans, and sorrows, would rather close her eyes than vainly task them to discover some ray of hope. And if thou wilt not pity me" she added with bitter tears—"me, poor old woman, to whom everything fails, and on the day when the child in the cradle is joyful, have no joy, because I can prepare none for others; yet is my grief seen by One above, who reckons tears and sighs, and will dry the wet eyes and heal the broken heart." Here she sat down exhausted, leaning her head on the shoulder of her son, who struggling amid sympathy and embarrassment at the painful scene, repeatedly pressed her hand, without mingling in the conversation.

"Strange!" resumed the husband; "thou hast hope in this Great Comforter, and nevertheless thou doubtest! And as he spoke, his countenance reflected a confidence which, besides the heavenly, bespoke the fulfilment of an earthly promise Benjamin now regarded him attentively, while his mother also was involuntarily excited and restless. "I do not, however, well perceive," resumed his father, after a short pause, "what it is that just now so untunes thy mind for the holy festival, unless it be the dream of which thou spakest to me this morning, and which deluded thy imagination with expectations that thou now findest unfulfilled. Didst thou not see a Christmas-tree, with numerous lights and varied many flowers, suddenly standing amidst thy old house-furniture, our children's cradle and their broken toys? and, on awaking, didst thou not find tears of joy in thine eyes?" His wife here nodded assent, for great inward emotion made her unable to speak. "Now wert thou not thinking," he smiled good-humouredly, "of some unexpected good fortune, and that Martha would bring the happy intelligence by the post?" Here he paused as if awaiting her answer; but, as she was silent, he proceeded: "Dreams are most commonly intended as a trial; they are the thermometer of a right faith; they are generally adhered to with a strange tenacity, while one seeks for something behind them, and forgets the power that is almighty. But, to spare the distressed heart of the afflicted wife, he took her fervently by the hand, saying, "Forgive me, if to cause you a surprise, I have hitherto been silent as to what will give you joy." She stared at him incredulously, and

scarcely comprehended him, as he now said, "Martha has, however, brought something with her. God chooses his messengers where and how he will. Only be comforted; the Christmas-tree is already lighted! come with me and see it."

She had mechanically followed him into the middle of the room; now, however, she suddenly stopped, while doubt and expectation were pictured in her countenance. Mistrustfully smiling, she said, as she drew her arm away from her husband's, "Pray go; thou art jesting with me, or else thou hast some design, in order to mortify me."

"God forbid!" exclaimed he, letting fall his folded hands in astonishment. "Why has thy heart become so tenacious of suspicion, and so stubborn against the kindness of God, that with this promise thou thinkest only of an unseemly jest, or of harsh self-willedness? Only look at me. Thy glance is become uncertain. Thou seest things unfairly and anxiously. I pray thee, only look at me calmly, and see if there is in my eyes aught else than a joyful heart."

She made no reply, and willingly allowed herself to be led to the door; yet her timid step and convulsive movement showed her anxious and ill at ease, and that she only watched an opportunity in order to turn back. As she now met the maid at the threshold, who was waiting with the lantern, Benjamin, by his father's desire, threw over her shoulders her thin, time-worn, fur-mantle. They then crossed the court-yard on to the road; while his mother, seized by a strange imagination and inwardly trembling, clung faster to her husband's arm.

"Great God!" her lips ejaculated, "art thou leading us then to the church-yard?"

"Hard by," was the short answer, which in the gloom sounded to her as that of a spectre, and caused a crowd of bewildering images to rush through her mind. The maid now, at her master's bidding, held the lantern a little higher; thereby the darkness was somewhat interrupted, but where the light shone not, only made darker. Every object around, as the church, the tower, and the trees, all appeared larger through the gloom.

"This is a frightful path!" groaned the lady.

"Look forward!" replied her husband; "we are now crossing the bridge, and going up the hill."

"What!" she cried, indignantly, "art thou leading us amid rubbish and ruins to the place of desolation, and deluding our senses with the dazzling lights of Christmas? For Heaven's sake! let us go no further!" she vehemently added, in the high excitement of her feelings, and with a gesture of aversion.

Benjamin, who was also perplexed, hesitated to follow his father.

"I tell you," exclaimed the latter, almost scolding, "there is no cause for doubt. Have you forgotten the five baskets with bread and the few fishes, for the thousands of believers on the mountains? Come, come! I promise you that to-day you shall yet be ashamed of your cowardice!"

So he led her on till they came to the dwelling of the deceased shepherd, David. As they now stood before the latched door, and her husband knocked, his wife listened to a secret whispering inside, whilst she followed the motion of the many lights, whose flickering flame glimmered through the chinks of the dilapidated wall. Meanwhile, she had no time to give utterance to her joy and wonder, for soon far different objects arrested her attention. On the door now being opened, they entered, and a fragrant odour of the yew-tree, of spiced cakes and Christmas candles came floating towards them, with all the charm of the sweet, dear days of childhood. A glare, as of a thousand stars, filled the little apartment, so that nothing was distinguishable but the flitting to and fro of a young, beautiful lady, who like a kind fairy, in the midst of a narrow circle closed around her, was distributing her gifts, great and small, and acknowledging with angel-tones the thanks and greetings of the little ones.

"Anna! my Anna!" cried the wife, at the first sound of the long missed voice; and hastily disengaging her arm from her husband, clasped her dear foster-daughter to her heart.

"Art thou my child—art thou?" she inquired repeatedly, glancing at the noble beauty of the stranger's countenance. Then scrutinising the refined features, the taller stature, the noble carriage, the richness of a gold chain, and the rings on her delicate fingers; "art thou really she?" she again inquired.

The maiden, who with difficulty suppressed her tears, nodded assent; and in order to check the overpowering emotion, led her foster-parents and youthful friend to the Christmas-tree, which was standing in the middle of the room, surrounded with all that the provident daughter had been able to procure for their entertainment and delight. There lay baskets and caskets, with articles of clothing, fine linen, rich furs, costly works ecclesiastical and secular, and the finest flax, for the busy hands of her friend. She likewise received a handsome red leather-purse, in which, as she curiously opened it, she found a considerable sum, with this express designation—"For the care of the sickly son."

"Child! my dear child!" stammered the overpowered, astonished woman; "art thou so rich? and are they good spirits that I have to thank?" As she said this, she glanced, somewhat furtively, at two dark-complexioned boys, who in their fire-coloured loose garments and coral ornaments, were, with strangely anxious looks, straying amid the lights, and especially towards the fruits and sweets and toys for the children.

"Be tranquil, my love," said the husband, calming the solicitude of his wife; "I know, and will in due time inform thee of all. For the present, delight thyself undisturbed, and let no anxious thoughts sully thy joys."

"I do rejoice," she replied, sitting down. "Certainly, I very much rejoice. But Anna, whence comest thou? and where hast thou been? If all were magic, and thou a fairy-queen or child of the fays"—

"Dear mother!" Anna interrupted her, smiling; "we know not what great things God can do. His wonders ever seem to us magic."

"Right, my daughter," assented the foster father. "We take away the honour from Him to whom it belongs; and whilst we doubt in Him, we give to folly and superstition a broad access to our reason. Do not be foolish," he admonished his reddening spouse, familiarly laying his hand on her shoulder. "Thou wilt also bethink thyself, when thy mind is again in its right position, and there will then be no place but for thanks and praise."

Benjamin, who meanwhile had contemplated with restless sympathy the strange and yet to his recollection familiar form of the

young angel, as she really seemed to him, now asked whether all along Anna had not invisibly been hovering around, in order to be acquainted with their joys and sorrows; and now, to gratify their heartfelt longings, had returned to them in all her former truth and reality.

She warmly replied, that ever since her return to her father-land, it had been the sole aim of her life to inform herself of the fortunes of her never-to-be-forgotten benefactors; for whose sake, alone, she had gone the long distance over the sea.

"Over the sea?" asked the wife, as if recoiling in terror at the monstrous idea. "There, where the men are of another complexion, and the sun stands still day and night—hast thou been there, Anna? What villain has kept thee so long a captive?"

"Nothing: nothing about it to-day," interposed her husband. "Let it suffice that she is here. And let us be calm to hear the recital."

"Ah!" replied his wife, "I think thou art well instructed, and mayest easily exercise patience; for, if I err not, Martha brought thee, on the last post-day, a letter containing what we most desired. Since then thou hast been, as it were, inverted; and little prophetic gift was needed to foresee some revolution in our wheel of fortune. Thou needst not dissemble, old man:" she laughed slily, "and I was only vexed that thou wouldst not explain thyself."

"So, so!" remarked he, smiling; "whence, then, the dream, the impatience, and the discord? But come, children," he continued; "it was Anna's desire to greet us at her grandfather's dilapidated hearth; and to the fulfilment of this her earnest wish, I have, according to my ability, with Martha's assistance, laboured in secret. But now she shall be once more at home by our fireside: so conduct her after me. Thou, my son Benjamin, bring again our daughter into our house."

Here he beckoned the youth with his young companion to follow him; whilst he, supporting the too happy mother, prepared to leave the hut. But she once more cast a glance behind her, and forced him also to look back; at the same time saying, "It was here, upon this spot, that I first found the dear heart; and here, also, as from the night of oblivion, has she returned

to us. I know not how it happened, nor can I trace the connexion, but this little hut has become to me as a temple that has shewed me life and death, and through both has exalted my soul. There," she continued, thoughtfully, pointing with extended hand towards the illuminated table, "there stood old David's dying bed. The shepherd's wallet and staff, with the faded ribbon which Anna's grandmother gave to her young love, are resting with him under the earth. Now, garlands of fresh evergreen are hanging on the vacant spot. All has become new," she added, gratefully, clasping her hands.

"Also thy faith," whispered her husband, "let it never more slumber or die," besought he, calmly pressing her to his bosom. They were soon quietly seated around the arm-chair of the good housewife, who had set out on the large dinner-table all her stores, her glance now attracted by the gifts, now by the giver; her provident mind already busy in thought, with cutting up the linen and stuffs for the wants of herself and household, with counting over the large sum of money, whereby she saw her beloved son restored to vigour and comfort. The old man, who was reclining at his ease, broke silence, by saying—"Now, dear daughter, let thy mother also know the story of the past, and so let all mystery be solved."

Anna, as if struck by a sudden pain, dropped her eyelids, and was unable immediately to find words for the recital.

Benjamin perceived what was passing in her mind, and as he had already obtained the wished-for intelligence from his young friend, he replied to his father, "Let us spare the fatigued one the superfluous exertion. You have a letter from Anna, and I know her writing is beautiful and clear. The lines contain quite enough to make us content."

"Art thou so satisfied?" said his father, laughing, or—now I guess thou needest to learn nothing further; but thy mother shall hear the story from my lips. The dear maiden, at the moment when I last perceived her, saw her pursuer, the captain of dragoons, amid the crowd, approaching her. In her anxiety, she sprang aside among the negro-boys, and seeking safety behind them, was hidden as under a dark cloud. It was no contrivance, nor purpose, but the working of terror that prompted her. In her anguish she fol-

lowed the troop, which last was lost among the throng. But the falcon, who had got her too well in his eye again to lose sight of her, pierced through the dark maze in which she was entangled; and the lads being overawed by his soldierly appearance, his threats and reproaches, he was on the point of seizing the trembling maiden, when the negroes, piping aloud, called an old man, with white hair, and firm, commanding aspect, to her assistance. This was the shipmaster, who, viewing with rising indignation the danger of the young, excited child, now hastened to her rescue. 'Back!' he exclaimed, as Anna unconsciously sank into his arms, fast clinging to him; 'back! I will defend the helpless one with my last drop of blood.' In vain the captain endeavoured to make good his claim to Anna with boasting words of falsehood; in vain he swore to be revenged of such resistance. The old navigator remained unshaken, and, as at last the foaming Frenchman, availing himself of his military dignity, gave orders to summon the watch, Anna's protector drew his short broad sabre, which hung at his side, resolved rather to make the last venture than expose innocence to insult. By this defensive attitude he covered her retreat, while the nimble blacks bore the stranger maiden to the ship, whither he slowly and thoughtfully followed her."

"God be praised!" cried the pastor's wife, ardently embracing her foster-child, as if she now saw her rescued from the threatened misfortune.

"Do not rejoice too soon," admonished her husband. "In the sphere where no one commanded but that brave old man, she was indeed secure from the dragoon captain, but Heaven willed for her yet another trial; for just as the ship was ready for departure, unfavourable winds, and other untoward circumstances, caused a further delay before weighing anchor. Then it sped away into the sea, and when Anna awoke from her swoon, she found herself surrounded by black and white servants, and reclining upon a couch in the most commodious part of the cabin, comprehending no more than if she were dreaming, and realizing the forgotten images of her childish imagination."

"What!" cried the wife, interrupting her husband, "did he take her with him into a strange country? So the last event

was worse than the first. Wherefore, then, before didst thou praise the hateful sea-robber?"

"Dear mother," said Anna, appeasing her wrath, "do you blame the brave, though somewhat despotic man, who, old, lonely, and childless, was returning from his last voyage, more dreading a useless, sickly old age, than even death? He considered that he had won my gratitude, and had bound me by perpetual obligation. A daughter, a cherisher, the child of his choice he saw in me. 'Thou canst have no heart within thee,' he often said, 'if thou lovest not thy deliverer. Thou hast no parents, and one foster-father is as good as another. None can do more for thee than I have.'"

"Nor was he, in his way, so very wrong," observed the old man; "certain it is, he meant well, and he did well. Like a princess has our child lived in her splendid palace at Calcutta. The lustre of immense riches surrounded her. Everything she had, except news from her home; for it is more than probable that none of Anna's letters found their way over the ocean. It was only the death of the rich factor that loosed her golden fetters. Now that he was obliged to forego her presence, he no longer opposed her return to this continent. By his will, wherein he had named her as his heiress, he had ordered everything needful for her voyage, and suitable accommodation. And now she is here," after a short pause; "for the rest God will provide."

And he proceeded still further in the same kindly strain as he had begun. Anna built upon the spot where stood old David's hut a handsome, commodious mansion; and when the next returning festival demanded of the good village fairy a Christmas tree, it illumined the friendly hall of the new habitation, which, led by Benjamin's hand, she that hallowed evening entered, thenceforth not less a happy wife than a pious daughter.

THE

Revolutionists.

EVERY event has its time—so had the French revolution. Wherever wilfulness breaks through the law it gives something to see and to experience. In one respect the whole world is a nation: people assemble from all quarters, and join themselves to each other, in order to share in what is newest. The prelude, even the early scenes of that bloody catastrophe, corrupted the unprejudiced mind that did not suspect the evil that lay behind. With quite incredible simplicity, people ran to the fire, only to see it burn. One drama like the other expands, agitates, and terminates in the accustomed manner. It was for this reason that many travellers now met together on the way to France.

On a December night, more disagreeable than inclement, in the year 1790, a close-shut travelling-carriage was proceeding on the road from Mayence to Strasburg; the post-horses were going forward at a brisk trot. Well-kept roads left all the fewer hindrances to be expected; and two bright lanterns from the coach-box threw down a distinct circle of light upon the ground. The more startling was it that, on a sudden, the horses pranced aside, and the postilion with difficulty kept himself and the carriage on the balance. The matter did not subside without much cursing and outcry, in which the servant, descending angrily from his elevated seat, joined in full voice; with this difference, however, that he, in

his wrath, gave back to the driver the abuse which the latter let forth upon his horses. Owing to the noise thus occasioned, a young, handsome man, within the carriage, drew his chin from under a large over-lapping fur cloak, and knocking repeatedly at the front window, without opening it, asked, as they were now stopping, what was the matter outside. The postilion had, in the meantime, dismounted; and just as his master was directing to him the question, exclaimed—"What! a cabriolet in front, overturned in the middle of the road! The horse with the broken-off pole, must have run away! Whoever sat there must indeed have had a pretty fall!"

"Open! Paul, open the door immediately!" was the cry from out the unclosed coach window. "Perhaps those poor people are losing their way, looking about here after the horse, and we can help them."

Paul, who was already at the carriage, standing uncovered, and turning the handle of the door, reminded his gracious master, at the same time, that it was cold, damp, unpleasant weather; that his trouble would be fruitless, and that this delay on the road would greatly retard their arrival at Strasburg.

"What is that to me?" replied his master. "Open!"

"Keep your seat," counselled the postilion, who in the meantime had more closely examined the remains of the damaged vehicle; "keep your seat! it is dark as the grave all around; one sees only so far as the lamps throw a light. The unfortunates in the thing there will surely have been wise enough not to hunt after the beast in such darkness; that would avail nothing. Probably they have taken their luggage, and gone on, on foot. The carriage is empty; this small chest and an article of clothing, are all that they have left." With these words he handed a lady's folded silk mantle into the carriage, pushing after it the flat leather-covered trunk, and adding—"At the next station we may probably obtain information as to the owners."

Uneasy at having this strange package by him in the carriage, the young man, whom Paul styled "Herr Colonel," drew himself further into the corner, and yielding, not altogether unwillingly, to the reasoning of the postilion, desired him only to be mindful that they got forward. In an instant, they were again in motion. They

made their journey still more quickly than before; it was as if the short disturbance had made them all the more lively, and had taken away from them the heaviness of the night. The postilion piped and sang alternately; Paul, who was, as well as the other, a native of Alsace, accorded with the custom of his people. The Colonel could not sleep, but kept rocking himself to and fro; whilst doing this, he observed that a strong vapour of tuberoses filled the carriage. He searched in every pocket, lest haply a small case containing this perfume had accidentally opened. In feeling and grasping about, he caught the mantle in his hands; as he moved it the odour became stronger. Thereupon, astonished and curious, he drew it nearer towards the light; and looked, as if questioning, at it. The black sarcenet, with inlaid wadding, and bordered with lace of the same colour, was new, fashionably made; the collar above adapted for the slenderest, most delicate neck. Involuntarily the young traveller let the ties which attached the folds together glide over his fingers, which caused a crowd of undefined images to rush through his mind. Smiling, he carefully laid aside the elegant covering of an unknown, perhaps beautiful form, resolving as soon as possible to rid himself of it, as also of the chest. This latter was about six inches deep, and a foot in diameter; a yellow metal plate concealed the lock, which seemed artfully wrought, and only to be opened by a peculiar kind of key. The nearness of that strange object caused the Colonel much disquiet; and scarcely had he arrived at the next station than his first word was to inquire after the travellers in the cabriolet. He caused the postilion to describe it in the most precise manner, then he exhibited the mantle which one of the persons who sat in the vehicle must have worn, in order to give a clue to their recollection of the persons; in short, he neglected no means of gaining light upon the subject, and of affording to those, of whom, notwithstanding all his trouble, he could find no trace, the prospect of recovering their property.

With this special view he left with the postmaster a card with the name—"Count Victor Medjerski, Colonel of a Polish regiment of lancers," and added on the back, in pencil, "remains three days in Strasburg, at the White Hotel, and in case, by that time, no inquiry is made after them, will deliver the found articles to the tribunal at Strasburg, to await the

claim of the rightful owners." This done, he went on to the next change of horses, where he directed the same inquiries, and left behind the same directions, but with as little success. He repeated this, with increasing disquietude, up to the barriers of Strasburg, where he at length arrived early in the morning, fatigued, cold, and out of humour. He was surprised, on entering his chamber, to find that he had involuntarily relieved the waiters of the trouble of carrying up the little black portmanteau. He bore it under his arm, and as he was now about to place it aside, he discovered that, lost as he was in thought, the mantle also, hidden between the folds of his cloak, was trailing around him. Almost ashamed, he cast both aside, and his cloak upon them.

A city, such as that in which he now found himself, at so excited a period, could not fail, by the influx of foreigners, to occupy his attention speedily in other ways. The political condition of the country was that especially which had drawn the Polish colonel hither. Partly from his own impulse, partly in the interest of a popular party, he had undertaken the journey. Wealth, activity, acuteness, with a combination of other fine qualities, rendered the ardent youth adapted for observation, and the more so as nature and habit had endowed his exterior with an air of dreamy indolence, which, while it disarmed the circumspection of others, gave full scope to the exercise of this quality in himself. He therefore threw himself carelessly into the tumult of coffee-houses and theatres, in order that he afterwards might be able to collect his thoughts at the more temperate discussions of the hotel table. The decree of the 27th November, against the priests who refused the oath, held for the moment all eyes in stedfast gaze at what should be the result of so decisive a procedure. If the example of great and exalted firmness on the one side, quickened hope and courage, so, on the other, thoughtless wit sharpened its scornful darts, infidelity and wild projects of liberty their bitter hatred against the venerable victims of the new era. Wondering and anxious, the former party beheld the king; the latter watchfully followed on his steps. He had declared himself against the apostates, and had taken the persecuted under his protection.

All this enkindled the minds of the revolutionists. The newest Parisian journals passed with wild haste from hand to hand; loud

was the contention thereupon, and not seldom an empty dogmatism brought one and another's written or spoken words to a bloody test. So excited by one folly after another, the revolution raged in the maddest manner among its adherents. Count Medjerski regarded with increasing earnestness the astonishing effects of the moral disorder; he felt disposed to have no judgment in the matter. Nevertheless, however, there were too many kindred elements at work among the youth of those days for the daring mind of the Pole not to be flushed; for his heart was taught to beat more quickly at the name of liberty. More excited than usual with much that he had heard at the table, and what he himself had there spoken, he was pacing, on the second night of his abode at Strasburg, amid rising projects and proud expectations, up and down his chamber. His heart was full, his blood was warm; the more as a lively exclamation escaped his lips, accompanied, too, by a vehement motion of his hands and arms. In such agitation he came, at a turn, upon something that, by a rustling noise, bespoke its nearness. The sound went thrilling through his soul. He stopped, looked up, and glanced at the taffeta mantle, which was hanging at its full length from a beam in the wainscoting, and which seemed, with its long-flowing, swelling folds, to encompass a human form. The Colonel started. He had, amid the whirl of other weightier subjects, forgotten the accidental occurrence. Involuntarily he advanced again with outstretched finger towards the silken stuff, as if he wished to try whether that sound had arisen from the former contact. The effect was naturally the same. "Hem!" thought he, "dost thou urge me to a new investigation? It is true that I have as good as forgotten the whole matter; perhaps I had here been more fortunate in my endeavours." He now seriously resolved on the morrow to try once more, whether in some way the right clue could not be found. Besides, it was the last day of his sojourn at this place, and consequently the extreme term which he had fixed for returning the found articles. Thenceforward, the owners, if such should appear, would have to do with the magistrate.

When a strange and sudden thought perplexes us, by intruding into another circle of ideas, we are inevitably cast upon the double struggle of retaining our vanishing impressions, as well as of grasping those which have intervened; the combination throws us

from our balance, and not seldom we fall into a feverish excitement, which unnaturally heightens the occurrence, and gives to it in these circumstances a painful dominion over the imagination. Such was the Count's discomposure, on the flight of his bold plans of freedom, at the sight of the mantle, as he felt it impossible to disentangle himself from the strange mixture of secret forebodings which seemed invisibly to hang thereon. He walked repeatedly up and down his chamber, rubbed his forehead with his hand, and at length seated himself fatigued upon the bed, his head leaning upon his upraised arm, his gaze fixed upon the portmanteau over against him. He did not directly fall asleep; meanwhile slumber approached him, in that sweet, perplexing, half-annulling of consciousness which, while it gives no power to dreams, yet envelopes the senses with the flocking clouds of night. In this twilight of the soul he thought he saw a beautiful slender form, dazzling white, with long, fair hair, and overhanging green veil, glide out of the casket and array itself in the folding mantle; the charming figure waved to and fro, as a flower agitated by the wind; at the same time he inhaled a strong odour of tuberoses. Whilst he was wondering, he discovered that what he had previously taken for a delicate maiden was a chalice-flower, with a long stem, exactly resembling a tuberose; only of larger dimensions. He felt at the moment an inward sensation, as if falling from a height; he looked around with astonished gaze, and, still somewhat confused with the weariness of his first slumber, was terrified at the inexplicable illusion. Scarcely had he risen and collected himself than he sought to unravel the strange vision.

When, at mid-day, he went to the dining-hall, he met two ladies on the staircase; one of whom was aged, of dark countenance and expressive features, and who, accompanied by a youthful beauty, advanced with short and hasty steps before him. The long, blonde hair of the delicate creature, whom he took for the daughter of the elder, covered, after the fashion of the time, half way down the back; and then again, in all its fulness and beauty, was gathered up and fastened on the top: the little straw hat, with green veil, which was placed rather aside and in front of the countenance, concealed scarcely anything of the luxuriance behind. The Colonel, who followed the ladies, had in this manner full opportunity to admire the handsome figure and head-tire of the younger. While

the latter stopped, and turned to adjust the dress of her companion, there met his gaze the soft features of the most delicately marked profile that he had ever beheld: he also paused involuntarily awaiting their further progress. Both seemed, however, to have a similar intention; at least, it was evident that it was not without some embarrassment that they hesitated in their further descent. To avoid the appearance of rudeness, the Count was obliged to go forward; he did so, and proffering a salutation, hurried by them; he accompanied the hasty movement only by a furtive glance at the fair, gentle, blushing maiden, whose downcast look and attitude bespoke the expression of tranquil sorrow. Amid a strange mixture of sympathy and, what seemed to him like recollection, he paced the dinner-chamber, unconscious how the latter feeling had possessed him, as he reflected that it was the perfume of tuberoses which the ladies accidentally carried, that had here recalled to him the little adventure of his journey. For a moment he thought that, perchance, he had now met with the owners of his burdensome treasure: he resolved to make further inquiries; and, in the first place, to give his skilful servant, Paul, the needful instructions for that purpose. Subsequently, however, many weightier matters intervened; especially a more intimate acquaintance with a Frenchman of distinction, who had sacrificed name and station for the young story of a new era, and had declared himself as a champion of liberty. The interesting disclosures which the quondam duke and peer of the realm was enabled to make, drew him off from all else that went on around him; so that it was only as it were by mere accident that the matter again occurred to him.

Once aroused, however, and more affected by what had occurred than was his wont, he could scarcely await the morrow, which should afford him some means and opportunity for a decisive step; besides, it was really possible that the unknown ladies, whose accidental meeting now seemed to him so significant, might be the travellers in the cabriolet! What if they had hitherto followed him, and, from timidity or other considerations, shunned to make themselves known to a stranger! If all had not deceived him, the earnest, sharp eyes of the elder had been scrutinizingly fixed upon him when all three stood on the staircase, and still rested on him when he, on entering the hall, as if accidentally,

looked backward. Unaccountable! he now thought, that this had not at once occurred to him, and that he had not at the same moment used the occasion to obtain some information. But who were the two, and what the cause of their timid shyness? He had dark conjectures, which yet he expressed all the less distinctly, as his interest for the fair, gentle maiden, assumed ever a more defined form; and he felt, with each passing hour of the night, a more lively impatience to seek after her. It might have been about three o'clock in the morning, when the lock of a door in an adjoining room was gently turned. The Colonel went forward a step; this somewhat increased the noise. "Who is there?" he cried with full-toned voice. The door opened as silently as if touched by a zephyr's whisper.

"Hush!" said some one in a strange under-tone; "hush! we are both alone, and it is for me to break silence. At last I must speak."

The Count looked astonished and annoyed at the little, pale, haggard man, who rudely pressed towards him, and with an air of the most remarkable coolness approached him more closely. A little high and proud, as was natural to his character, he thereupon replied, stopping the other's way, "Who are you, sir? and what would you of me at this inconvenient hour, in so secret a manner?"

"The first question," retorted the other, "is, between us, of no importance; as to the second you will be in no doubt, when I announce myself as the owner of the small trifles upon which, on your journey, you had the goodness to bestow some attention."

"You the owner?" asked the Colonel, astonished.

"As I have had the honour to tell you," was the decisive answer.

The former, to whom it only now occurred that he had not acted with due circumspection, in offering the articles without further conditions, remarked, with a slight trace of scorn upon his lips, that he might be pardoned should he hesitate to accede to a demand so proposed. "Unquestionably, sir," he added, "you will be candid enough to see that there is still some other proof required to induce me to return what, as the property of a stranger, I am not authorized to pass lightly from my hand."

The stranger stood with his arms folded, in a negligent attitude, and looking about him with an air of indifference, exclaimed,

shrugging his shoulders, "Bah! how many useless ceremonies about such trifles. From your haste to be rid of the things, I had not expected this punctiliousness."

"It needs not offend you," replied Count Medjerski, "if, through your interposition, I first recognised my own thoughtlessness."

"Ah!" cried the stranger, quickly raising his head; yet, as bethinking himself, adding with jovial irony, "yes, truly, my way of making visits has something striking in it; meanwhile, however this may be, here I am. After all, you cannot but trust me as well as any other person who may ask you for a little black chest with yellow metal plate, and a lady's mantle, both of which you have exhibited at all the stations, enough to authorize numberless similar applications. I was curious as to your proof of the validity of the claim."

The Colonel, irritated at the light scorn that made him feel his want of deliberation, did not reflect a moment, but fixing his eyes sharply and firmly on his unwelcome visitor, rejoined, "The proof, sir, lies in the possession of the key belonging to the chest; so soon as this is opened before me, I am quite ready to surrender my rights."

"Hem!" replied the stranger thoughtfully. "And if the key should be lost, and the owner unable to comply with your demand?"

"Well, then indeed," hastily interrupted the other, "the chest must be forcibly opened, and the claim to its contents be justified by the owner first describing them, his statement being verified by the inspection."

Here the stranger, in visible emotion, retreated a step, and stretching himself up in height towards the youth, with the strangest expression of pride and embarrassment, inquired, "How? could you make that demand?"

"And why not?" was the confident answer.

"Why not?" replied the former vehemently. "And if, through an unnecessary curiosity, you should drag some precious secret into light, heap insult and reproach upon more than one unpolluted head, and for the sake of an untimely conscientiousness should expose your own conscience to far bitterer struggles? Young man," he added, with increasing warmth, "young man, human rights, like everything upon earth, have their Janus-face; the Divine Word

alone is single. It tells us, 'Love thy neighbour as thyself.' Can you love without confiding? And what entitles you, after this command, to harbour greater suspicion against me than against yourself? In times like the present, an action, an event, the conduct of a man, often looks quite otherwise than as he is inwardly disposed. My nocturnal surprise may astonish you; but why explain it in the most invidious manner?"

"Not that, sir," said the Count, interrupting him; "but I abide by the sense of your own words. In a time like the present, one should neither be deterred nor yet deceived by outward appearances. It may be that, through overhastiness, I have, in other ways, placed persons in a painful perplexity, who have more reason to claim my circumspection than you have. I must, therefore, require that you will allow the condition just proposed to hold good. You will not, by this, expose your secret, if such exists, to any further indiscretion; for I pledge my honour to observe the deepest silence, as to what may be the contents of the little chest."

"If a word of honour is here of any avail," exclaimed the stranger, angrily, "I can demand for mine as much regard as you for yours. But, distrust against distrust! I have no wish to enter into stipulations, and am resolved, at any cost, to get possession of my property, and stake my life upon the game. Therefore, sir," he continued, after a momentary silence, "I give you four-and-twenty hours for reflection. To-morrow night, about his hour, I shall inquire your resolution; and, should you remain in your present mind, to determine immediately on the weapons, among which you may then decide."

It seemed, at this moment, as if a third person said something. At least the Count thought he heard another voice besides that of the one who stood before him. He therefore looked around, and meanwhile the other left the room. The door sprang silently into the lock. Nothing afterwards betrayed the nearness of a living being. The incident was most mysterious. The Colonel's sensibilities were vividly excited, yet he saw no way out of the labyrinth. Perhaps, at first, he had been too scrupulous as to the delivery of the strange articles; but after the turn the discussion had taken, he could not be a hair's breadth more yielding. The necessity for thus acting was evident. With this he

had been able to content himself; but the danger of lying under a misinterpretation troubled him with the most painful uncertainty, whether he should not avoid the unequal contest with a probably much-oppressed man, and adopt a middle course to solve the misunderstanding. Innumerable were the conflicting thoughts that strove within him. Vexed at having met with so embarrassing an adventure, which had, besides, a romantic and ridiculous aspect, he wished rather to think no more of it; and throwing himself on the bed, fell asleep till the bright morning.

The cheerful flame on the hearth, at which the house-servant was busy laying on wood, awoke him in an agreeable manner. He looked up enlivened, and as everything now seemed to him more natural and intelligible than during the night, his blood flowed more tranquilly, and the warm glow of the room banishing thence all evil spirits, he saw in the somewhat ghostly visit only a piece of cunning knavery—in him who practised it an adventurer—in the duel an intimidation. Thus determined, he laughed out boldly, as he thought, at the high words, and the ill-concealed disquiet with which they were uttered. The more he contemplated the diminutive man in the coloured hues which the day-light reflected, the more he discovered in him what was improbable and fictitious. It was, therefore, with no particular interest that he inquired of the youth at the fire-place, who might be the occupant of the adjoining room.

The lad looked at him, and, with an air as if doubting the question, repeated, "Who occupies the adjoining room?"

Whereupon the Colonel nodding assent, the other, shaking his head, assured him that for four days it had stood empty.

"Thou art mistaken," was the reply; "only last night I heard a noise in it!"

The youth, laughing, persisted in his assurance, and proposed, in order to be quite clear on the matter, that the butler—who just then was passing—should unlock the door, and let the gentleman be convinced by his own eyesight.

Count Medjerski, willing to be satisfied, called to the butler, who thereupon came in. The door being opened, showed a room quite empty, and which, for a long time, had to all appearance remained unoccupied.

"Incomprehensible!" said the Count, on entering; "I could

have sworn"—and he cast a scrutinising glance around without saying anything further.

The familiar odour of tuberoses, which like something supernatural floated towards him, bewildered his thoughts. He turned away so perplexed, that on the butler triumphantly saying, "You see now, sir!" he made no answer; and left the two laughing between themselves at his error.

"Intolerable!" said he, throwing himself into an elbow-chair by the fire-side; "What mean these fooleries and mummeries? To me they are ill applied. Nothing is so distasteful to me as such stage-tricks!"

Meanwhile, it appeared as if fate would try his patience with more such tests; for now, just as loud discontent and secret longings divided his mind, a repeated knocking at the door aroused him to a disquiet for which he could scarcely excuse himself. Yet he remained silent, as Paul was not present; and the concourse in taverns, as everywhere, so also here, was insupportable. But this kind of denial would not do. Without further inquiry there entered a man, having on his head a round basket with apples and other winter fruits, and making with both his vacant hands a variety of strange and unintelligible signs, after the manner of deaf and dumb persons.

The Count, who felt within the strife of sympathy and aversion, did not oppose his entrance. He allowed him to approach nearer, looked at and handled his wares, which he intimated might be placed on an empty dish standing by; after which, the other pocketing the payment, signified with the wild vehemence of impotency, by look, signs, and gesture, what he could not utter. Anxious for his riddance, the Colonel warned him away with his hand, and having turned his back upon him, the unfortunate, with repeated obeisances, took his leave.

"Must not the fresh, smiling fruit, by their alluring glances, invite him to life's enjoyment, who, nevertheless, is excluded from it?" thought Count Medjerski, as he looked sorrowfully after the mute.

He seated himself again in his arm-chair, and played with the apples on the plate. As his fingers glided to and fro, he perceived that he held a billet in his hand, which had been sticking between the fruit. "What is this?" he exclaimed, holding the neatly folded

note closer to his eye. It was directed to himself—"A new Comedy!" He smiled jestingly, uncertain whether he should break the seal. Curiosity, and perhaps another motive, more hidden and dangerous than that, induced him to tear off the envelope, and amid quick heart-throbbings, he read the following:—

"An extraordinary fate demands extraordinary measures. Think here of nothing that happens in the accustomed manner. Let every voice be silenced but that of humanity. This cannot deceive you; and even though it should, yet console yourself with this, that to be so deluded is an honour that outweighs the value of temporal things, there, where we are estimated according to the measure that we mete to others. Listen to the prayer of an unfortunate, whom your obstinacy, sir, threatens to deprive of her last protector. Deliver the articles in question this evening in the twilight, to the dumb man, who will wait at your door until you admit him. I add nothing further. If there be faith and confidence in your soul, they will both prevail; if not, what would avail the assurance that you will only deliver to the rightful owner what belongs to her?"

The Colonel gazed at the fine hand-writing. It was that of a lady, written hastily, yet very distinctly. "Suppose she were so?" thought he. The beautiful form, the downcast eye, the troubled mein! All spoke the recollection to his heart. "And if not," he exclaimed, resolutely, "thy apparition, heavenly being, has once made intercession, whether for thyself or some other! Yes!" he repeated, "I set all other considerations aside; even that of a jealous feeling of honour. Thou sayest, however, unknown being, those warm emotions of the heart will still glow, when the dream of life expires! And what thou sayest"—

Here a noise, outside, in the passage, startled him. He hid the paper in his bosom, and hastily locked mantle and chest in a cupboard, putting the key in his pocket, as the young republican Duke, inquiring after him with a loud voice, entered the room. He held in his hand letters and papers, both of which he threw on the table, and himself into the next chair.

"Truly," he exclaimed, "that sets the crown on the mad tricks! They are actually putting the weapons into the people's hands. Will you believe it? The Count of Provence has fled—the King is making secret preparations to follow him—and the rebel priests are paving his way. In all circumstances and affairs these persons find, under some pretext, the way and means of evasion. No one, in this way or that, is sure of meeting them. Nay, it is possible," he added

hesitatingly, half laughing, half arrested by the fancy, "it is possible that you, my dear Count, with all your outward shew of republican enthusiasm, may be a masked priest, and he secretly pronouncing over me the anathema."

"You are jesting," replied the Count, "with too much bitterness over an order that is equally adverse to your purposes, and opposed to your convictions. You ought rather to honour the firmness which makes every sacrifice to conscience."

"Every sacrifice?" cried the other repeatedly, indignantly starting from his seat. "Oh, you little know to what these men are forcing us. It matters naught to you that family bonds are rent asunder, and the father-land split into manifold dissensions: you have neither family nor father-land. Everywhere is your home, if only you find room for crafty instigations. Me!" he exclaimed, striking his breast with the same vehemence as he spoke the words; "me it is, that their perilous influence robs of life's repose. Therefore, if only I scent the presence of one of your boxes, my blood foams over with effervescing flame."

"I hope it is not my presence," said Medjerski, "that so disconcerts your humour."

"No, Colonel," replied the Duke; "but if all has not deceived me, I have to-day met a very suspicious object quite in the neighbourhood of your chamber, and truly in a singular guise."

"Explain yourself more distinctly," responded the other, drily.

"We will not allow it to be disagreeable," smiled the young Frenchman, at the same time drawing nearer to the table, and taking one of the apples, as he remarked gaily, while eating it, "one cannot now-a-days vouch for anything. Heaven only knows with whom, in such a house as that in which we now are, we may not be dwelling, under the same roof. Indeed, it is possible that even the Count of Provence might be haunting about here in some disguise."

"You take him to be a very strange fellow," said the Colonel, as a dark conjecture flashed upon him, and he felt almost terrified at the undefined thought. This might in some degree have been reflected on his countenance; for the Duke, fixing his eyes upon him, said—

"And you take it very seriously. But come," he added carelessly; "it is time to go to the dinner-table. They have been some

time assembling in the dining-hall, and my purpose in coming was to fetch you."

Here he packed together the papers which he had previously thrown down, and which, in the first excitement of the received intelligence, he had brought with him. As he was arranging them, he put aside one not belonging to the rest. On this he cast only an accidental glance, which sufficed, however, to chase the blood into his cheeks, and then to leave them pale and colourless. Hastily catching at the object of so overpowering an impression, he stammered—

"How do you come by this handwriting? Since when? I pray you, whence? And in what way did you get possession of a letter addressed to you by that hand?"

The Count, who, without any dread of a possible betrayal, had laid on the table, as of no importance, the empty cover of the lately received note, now also changed colour. Disagreeably perplexed by the idea that he might now be involuntarily entangled, either in the secret play of a strange intrigue, or in the fate of persons wholly unknown, he answered, not without a visible effort to collect himself—

"I really regret, sir, that I am unable to give you any information. No one can be more ignorant in the matter than I am, to whom neither recollection nor conjectures afford any probable trace of the author."

"Enough!" said the other, interrupting him; "you wish to be indebted to me for the answer. The entire web of a diabolical artifice lies stretched out before me! But be you assured I will tear it asunder. The traitress who has confided in your protection, is infallibly here. The wafer is still wet, that sealed the delicate note." With these words, he passionately crushed the fateful paper, and then with tremulous voice continued: "You have contrived me for your game! outwitted, scorned—" here his voice failed him; "yet, sir," he exclaimed angrily, "you shall render me an account upon the spot, here in this room, this very moment! I care for nothing more. Only with my life shall you dispute with me the possession of the only property on which I lay any value. Well now," he continued, quite out of himself; "do not long bethink yourself. There are pistols, which, it is to be hoped, are well loaded.

A fortune-hunter," said he, laughing with bitter rage, " may not go upon adventures without such precautions."

" Hold!" cried Count Medjerski, with a calmness that seemed to mock the other's vehement passion; " I have allowed you to finish. I could afford to do so. My name, as my person, is subject to no misinterpretation. You are involved in a singular error; and still more singular is it, that I am not in the least able to convince you of the contrary. Now I should not perhaps wish it," he smiled with constrained mildness, " even were it in my power. As to all else, I am ready to satisfy your demand; only I must beg a few hours' delay, as I have first to adjust a previous affair which still detains me at this place."

" How, sir?" exclaimed the Duke impetuously; " if you have kindled the flame on both sides, and hope to extinguish one fire by means of the other? But be upon your guard! I shall watch you. And if I am obliged to unite against you with my bitterest foe, I will hunt you from your prey."

" We do not understand one another," said the Colonel, coolly; " wherefore more words? May I beg?" he continued, opening the door; " we were going to the dining-hall. I, for my part, feel very hungry."

The Duke stamped with his foot. " At what hour shall I again meet you here?" he asked, with flaming eyes.

" Early to-morrow morning, at seven o'clock," was the answer.

Both now greeted each other with a mute salutation. Medjerski locked the door, and descended the staircase; the other rushed angrily into his room.

Amid the thousand bewildering thoughts that, during the meal-time, sped through the Count's mind, the question arose whether by that seductive thread, he might not become entangled in the subtle plans of the royalist party; and even unconsciously serve as the instrument of their plans. Who was the mysterious little man? Distinguished, repulsive, thoughtful, bold, all bespoke a person of high birth. Perhaps he was one of the retinue of the Count of Provence; perhaps some one high in confidence. But she! she! who was she? His gloomy look, as these contemplations sank within him, lay fixed on one spot. In restless agitation he had several times thrust his hand into his bosom, and there feeling the

letter, had pressed it closer to his breast. It might be that a rustle of the paper struck upon his neighbour's ear, for a voice behind him said to him softly, "Burn quickly what you already should long since have destroyed." He looked round astonished. An elderly lady who had sat on the same side of the table, and had just left her seat, was passing his chair. Beneath her large bonnet, his met an eye, whose piercing and commanding expression he seemed to recognise. "Was she not the companion of the beautiful maiden on the stairs? and again"— He became quite confused. His nocturnal visitant—he could have sworn it was the same countenance.

"You seem to know the lady?" inquired a gentleman opposite.

"Slightly," he replied, in embarrassment.

"Perhaps an old, scolding aunt," laughed the other jokingly; "who, as she passed, whispered you a reproof."

"You are upon the right track," said the Colonel carelessly, who felt uncomfortable at the strange interference.

"Now," said the other, who was the host, and a jovial man, pleasant to everybody; "the good lady meant no evil. She is from the country, and often travels hither on her way to her relations beyond the Rhine."

"So her appearance is not strange to you?" asked several at the table, whose attention her whisper on passing had attracted.

"So little," returned the host, "that I know by sight all the members of her family, and the reference to the Colonel was well understood by me."

The latter, as entirely convinced of the contrary of what was now said, as of his own existence, startled at first; yet it was not long before the idea occurred to him that the clever inn-keeper, in the confidence of the incomprehensible secret, wished, in a skilfu manner, to anticipate the inquiry to which he well knew the very appearance of the lady, and still more her familiar approach to the chair, would excite the attention of the curious. He was the more confirmed in his conjectures, as the talkative man avoided his glance, whilst he spoke at great length concerning the name, rank, and relations of the singular lady. Hereupon, for a while, all made themselves merry with the lady. Her several peculiarities, as her sprightly manner, her bonnet and mantle pushed behind as she sat at table, her way of holding her fan, her hasty and frequent resort

to a large snuff box, her taciturnity while eating, next to the commanding expression of her countenance, were the subject of much conversation and laughter.

Medjerski laughed not. His breast was, in many ways, stormily agitated. He could scarcely await the opportunity of speaking alone with the host, who had so unexpectedly contributed to his right understanding of the matter. At length the table was cleared, the guests were scattered, and the host went to his business. The Colonel availed himself of the general movement; he left the hall with the purpose of obtaining further light in the right direction. To his vexation, he saw himself followed at every step by the man who was deaf and dumb. He seemed determined, at his assigned post, to execute conscientiously the commission he had received. By the alarming vivacity of his features, and the confused hurry of his finger-language, he expressed his impatience and expectation. The Colonel was so disturbed by his demeanour, that, partly to be rid of him, partly to obtain liberty for further measures; and, with the intention of sending some hasty lines to reproach the strangers for his concerted meeting with the mysterious night-walker, gave him a beckon, and ran with him up the stairs. It being already dusky in the side passages, the lamps not yet kindled, Paul absent, and both butler and waiter busy below, the Count had some trouble in the darkness before he could fit the door-lock with the key. Whilst he was still clattering at the door, he heard short, hasty steps approaching, and a voice of anxious emotion whispered—

"For God's sake! into the very next room! It was he! I recognised him. He is following us. I am undone!"

Medjerski had his hand upon the latch of the door, which, at the same instant opened, as the fugitives followed by their pursuer, rushed with them into his chamber, where, in the absence of lights, they were standing together, all unknown to each other, paralyzed by an involuntary terror, speechless, and in uncertainty, and only recalled to a fearful consciousness, by the hollow, half-brutish efforts of the dumb man's stammer.

It was not long before a voice from the midst which betrayed the Duke's presence, exclaimed, "Ah, Natalie! so it was reserved for me to find you again?"

"In vain," she stammered, scarcely mastering her senses, "should I endeavour to deceive you as to my person. Yet," collecting herself, she added in a firmer tone, "what right have you to this? Yes, sir, I am she, I am that Natalie, who in better days was your betrothed; and who now, as an impassable gulf of convictions and principles divides us, is flying with a relation from her father-land to bury herself and her recollections in a distant cloister."

This explanation, which also sensibly affected the Colonel, so entirely occupied the attention of the Duke, that the words; "Now quickly deliver the trunk to the dumb man, and then away with this," were whispered by the maiden in Medjerski's ear, and he was able to assist in fulfilling the purpose. Already the fateful chest was in the destined hands, when Paul entered with two lights so suddenly that the other, in his wild hurry, let fall his entrusted treasure to the ground. At the same moment the lid sprang open, and showed, with the portrait of the queen, letters and parcels that betrayed in whose interests the owners were commissioned. Natalie's companion hesitated not a moment. Stripping off the mask, the Colonel's nocturnal visitant, holding in one hand a small crucifix, which he carried on a rosary at his breast, in the other holding a pistol towards the Duke, advanced to the picture, whilst his kindling eyes, still more than his menacing voice, exclaimed—

"Back! back! in the name of heaven and earth!"

The Duke was visibly astonished; yet the other knew how quite to paralyze him, as with countenance fast set upon him, he added—

"Apostate from the church, as from your anointed king; sooner or later, an offended conscience will avenge the wanton outrage. Horrible youth! my arm is, through higher power, furnished with weapons. Wilt thou, however, betray me and this heroic maiden, who, devoting herself to the service of her mistress, as well as to heaven's, has hitherto been the stay of a persecuted priest, wilt thou, I say, betray us? Come on! I will purchase every step with blood."

Natalie, in the meanwhile, had grasped the Duke's hand. She said only, "Fare thee well!" with an expression of voice, with a look and gesture so beseeching, as almost seemed to sound, "Come with me!" He looked at her quite disarmed, struck both hands over his face, and neither saw nor hindered that she with the

ecclesiastic on her arm gently stole from the room, and soon after left the house.

As now the two were left alone, they sank overpowered into one another's arms. A few hasty words were all that elucidated what still remained mysterious. Was it the sight of the beautiful maiden? was it the influence of a noble, pious disposition, that, true to its faith, at no moment wavered? Suffice it that the Count's republican ardour so gradually cooled in Strasburg, that, after a few days, he proceeded on his journey homeward. The host, it seemed, had informed him as to several particulars; he was well instructed, and in the confidence of the ecclesiastic, who had recourse to him, owing to that mischance with the broken cabriolet and the runaway horse, in order to regain the lost property. How both acted in concert is evident.

At a later period, would the reader know, Natalie had not taken the veil, but the Duke forsook the rebel-party, and took the oath under Condé's banners. After a time, on the hand of his youth's love, he returned to France, where, in the year 1814, he again sought Medjerski at the head of the Russian regiments. Who the ecclesiastic was remained unknown.

Valerie.

For several years after the peace of 1763, there lived at Berlin the widow of a bookseller, of the name of Fonrobert, in a high, narrow, dark-looking house, situate at the end of "The Brothers' Street," adjoining St. Peter's Church Yard. The aged lady continued the business of her deceased husband with good success, by the aid of a skilful and honest assistant. Herr Etienne, like his principal, was of the French settlement, and, besides the bonds of nationality, was personally his relative; and being a poor, but useful member of the family in which he had been trained and brought up, he was, at last, as intermediate between confidant and servant, appointed head manager of the business.

During the agitations of the war-time, every species of commerce had suffered manifold shocks: but especially had the field been narrowed for intellectual productions. The spread of French literature, which occasioned such early success to the active, sharp-witted foreigner, must, under the hostile influences of the time, have experienced the most discouraging checks; so that speculation was at a stand, and only diligence and carefulness availed to extricate the business from its heavy and still increasing burdens. Here it was that the sprightly, joyous Fonrobert, ever more disposed to a rash forwardness than to a timid forbearance, especially needed the calmness of his companion. Gentle and

even-tempered in all things, the latter took no useless step, made no ambitious movement, did not reach far forward, though, unperceived, he by small degrees provided for the future; and thus, by such measures, retrieved his temporarily embarrassed vocation.

At a later period, Madame Fonrobert had every reason to be thankful for such a procedure: she saw herself, after the sudden death of her only son, and that which quickly followed, of her husband, supported by a friend, to whom she owed not only the assistance of the moment, but the comfort of a station which exactly corresponded to her modest and peaceful spirit. The mute sorrow of her gentle soul desired nothing more from life than quietness, and an unanxious resignation to the course of outward events. In her first terror she would have fled altogether from the cares of the domestic circle, for she had not the power actively to contend with them; she therefore blessed the hand of the faithful Etienne, who had so easily conducted her out of those days of darkest anguish to the old habits of her former life. Though all within her was as if dead and palsied, yet, without everything remained in place; and, from henceforth, that which one day brought might also be expected from the morrow. Gradually her sorrow subsided into the depths of her soul, and nothing thereof remained for the rest of her life but the need, from long habit, of an unchangeable tranquillity. Nowhere could more order and regularity be seen than prevailed in her house. She seldom left the little back room which immediately adjoined the shop. Herr Etienne spent the greatest part of the day in a small latticed apartment between the two, for the double purpose of being to both places—as circumstances might require—immediately at hand. Here he managed his correspondence, made his calculations, gave and received commissions, and was in all these occupations scarcely ever disturbed by the intrusion of her to whom he had devoted a whole life, full of labour and exertion. Exactly as during the lifetime of her husband, did Madame Fonrobert now remain free from all participation in the affairs of business—as formerly, she only conversed with her kinsman at meal-times, and shewed herself fully content when, now and then, from the nearness of the solitary being, his dry, hectic cough convinced her that she was still connected, through benevolence and gratitude, with the living world.

At six o'clock, in the harvest and winter seasons, the shop was closed; in the longer days this happened an hour later. As soon as the closing doors had creaked into the corners, the bolts been driven, and the iron bars had rattled, the old servant maid arose from her comfortable seat on the chimney hearth, in order to prepare the light supper for her mistress. When she had served it, and placed a seat against the little table, Madame Fonrobert, taking a small hand-bell, gently rang it, which was the accustomed signal to the already waiting company. Immediately the door opened, when, almost unperceived, the quiet man entered, and having made his greeting, noiselessly took his seat; then laying aside his manuscripts and printing toils, he tasked himself to get up an enlivening conversation, which reminded both of better days, and especially of a journey into France, in which Madame Fonrobert had accompanied her husband. This brighter epoch of her existence recurred to her as with the early dawn of youth, and gave to its recalling images a surpassing warmth and liveliness. Involuntarily, the generally inactive fancy of the dull, sickly lady, was thus enlivened; and though she was far removed from encouraging the wish for similar enjoyments, yet she loved whatever might lead back her thoughts to the lighter materials of a harmless gaiety. The repeated requests to continue the conversation—which always began with the words, "You know, Monsieur Etienne"—were by him carefully regarded. He always knew what she wished to be told, and was only silent when, having wiped her fork, she laid it aside as a signal that the meal-time was over: then he left his seat, helped the good Anna to remove the cloth, opened for her the door, which she gently drew after her, filled the drink-cup of the little Bolognese dog, that was frisking and sniffing by his side, poured out for himself a glass of fresh water, which he held in one hand, whilst with the other he took down from the chimney-piece a little oblong chest, by which movement he could seldom prevent the dominoes which it contained from clattering, and Madame Fonrobert's exclamation, "Aha! our play!" which somewhat displeased him, as he really only contemplated devoting the little pastime to some useful purpose, but did not wish to be mindful of the thing itself. As, however, the same misluck befell him every evening, it came, at last, to belong to the established order of

things, and was not to be omitted. For one short hour, then, the quiet play lasted, only interrupted by the short, husky cough of poor Etienne. After nine o'clock there was seldom a light seen in the widow's chamber.

Contrary to all custom, one rough and stormy evening in autumn, the domino game of the two friendly combatants had been prolonged, through various little stratagems and calculations of the complaisant kinsman, beyond the appointed hour. Madame Fonrobert was in her best humour: she amused herself in watching for the failure of her wary opponent, and laughed almost audibly whenever she had the good fortune to catch him. While she was considering her play, she was suddenly terrified by the growling of the little dog, which, from lying behind her on the sofa cushion, sprang up, and as, from the approach of something strange, began, first in a low tone, then more briskly, to bark. She looked about after him in astonishment, and endeavoured to quiet him. But quick as lightning the little beast flew by her, into a side-chamber that stood open, and where the windows looked toward the street. Formerly the deceased Fonrobert had occupied this room; it was now empty, yet the affectionate spouse loved to have it opened and lighted of an evening. In the strangest emotion she followed the dog, which kept springing from chair and table on to the window-board, and barking out still more vehemently against the panes. Amidst the noise hereby occasioned, there was plainly distinguishable the moaning voice of a human being crying for help. At the same moment the house-bell was rung with such violence, that Madame Fonrobert, so accustomed to quietness, trembled in every limb, and sinking on a chair, could imagine nothing else than that, in the midst of peace, the enemy was breaking into the unguarded capital. The same terror again agitated her, as again it rang, and more vehemently. Herr Etienne had already a light, and the house-key in his hand, when his relative, with disturbed mien, stammered out, "Where are you going? to the robbers and incendiaries, who are storming the house? For God's sake stay here—stay here, Etienne!"

"Some one is calling for help," he replied softly, bowed, and in an instant was out at the door.

"Now it is all over with us!" exclaimed Madame Fonrobert, as

Anna rushed into the room to inquire the cause of the unwonted tumult. "The Russians and Hungarians are here again! they will plunder all the houses! and whoever opposes them is doomed to death!"

"The Hungarians!" screamed Anna, as if demented, whilst she covered her head with her upraised apron. With hurried steps the book-keeper now approached them; he thrust his head in at the door, beheld the two frantic women, and in perplexity asked, in a low and uncertain tone, "Dare I, madam?—A helpless creature begs for your protection."

"What can I do?" replied Madame Fonrobert, starting back in terror.

"Protect grace and innocency," was the modest answer.

"Force their persecutors here to us; who will then escape from their revenge?" exclaimed the lady.

"Anguish and want are the persecutors," replied Etienne: "these will remain without, if we allow the persecuted to come in."

With these words he entered the room, dragging after him, almost by main-force, a sobbing, trembling young maiden.

"What!" exclaimed Madame Fonrobert, quite angry, "is it a child that has made all this alarm? and are you bringing the impetuous little creature into our quiet house?"

She said this and more, softly and hastily in her mother-tongue, partly because she was accustomed to use this to her relative, and partly not to be understood by the unwelcome guest. However, immediately after the first words the little maiden raised her head with an astonished air, and fixing upon her her fine dark eyes, full of intelligent expression, replied quickly and passionately in the same language—

"Ah! do not fear, madam; I do not wish to be burdensome to any one here. I only ask for a glass of water to moisten the tongue of a dying woman."

She could scarcely pass the last words over her quivering lips; whilst, at the same time, the beseeching and vehement motion of her uplifted hands showed how ardently she desired the accomplishment of that little wish. Herr Etienne hasted to do as she desired, whilst Madame Fonrobert, most deeply agitated by the strange expression of the beautiful child, repeated with every token of sympathy—

"A dying woman! For God's sake where, then? pray tell, my poor maiden. Who is dying, and where?"

Unable to repress her tears, she replied by pointing with upraised arm toward the street; and Etienne, drawing on his coat, ran with her to the door.

"Go with them, Anna," said her mistress; "see what happens, and bring me word."

A murmuring and bustle in the street, occasioned by the concourse of a multitude, drew, at the same time, Madame Fonrobert to the window. She opened it, and heard from several voices—

"Death on the spot! The thunder-clap must have struck her!"

"No one can know that, certainly," interposed a young man, who with difficulty had made his way through the crowd, and who added with officious confidence, "Only into the nearest house with the unfortunate! There must be means employed for her preservation."

Starting, and vainly contending with the aversion to such a strange and horrible sight, Madame Fonrobert beheld immediately the stiff corpse of a lifeless female drawn over her threshold, and into the very room where she was, as being the nearest to the house-door. The faithful Etienne hastened towards the painful object, and seizing with mute and pacifying gesture both the hands of his benefactress, he seemed to invoke, in the name of Providence, forgiveness for the misfortune which in so unforeseen a manner had befallen her. He gently urged her away from the place where she was standing, and tried to turn her look from that strange and startling countenance. But the terrified lady once aroused from the peaceful course of her gentler feelings, was riveted in fevered stupefaction on the object which infused into her soul the deadliest anguish. Meanwhile, could anything reconcile her to the involuntary cause of so great disturbance of the household, it was the still, resigned features of the softly sleeping woman, whom no medical skill, no art of surgeon could awaken. Quite sunk from the weakness of age, there lay on a hand-barrow, in the middle of the room, surrounded by idlers and strangers, a small, slender female form, with a foreign physiognomy, now as unconscious as painless. Her glazed eye no longer regarded the stiff and motionless child, that seemed to ask herself and the men around her what had happened. A momentary silence, which even the

rudest did not venture to interrupt, held in restraint all questions and surmises. Here, however, the unfortunate one could not remain. But who was she? and on whom was the burden and expense of the interment to fall? Was she a poor person of the town, or a nameless stranger of whom no one could give any account? All this passed with lightning-speed through the minds of the bystanders.

Most men think aloud, and, as the natural contemplations occurred to each one, there ran through the little apartment corresponding expressions to the ear of Madame Fonrobert, who, undecided and anxious, watched the entire procedure. As now, in the meantime, an officer of police entered, and made preparations for removing the dead body to the Town-hall, where it should remain exposed till some relative, or at least acquaintance, might recognise it, and tell the name and station of the deceased; as he fixed the space of two days for this purpose, and declared that in case of entire desertion, it would, as belonging to the class of the common poor, be buried as such, the magnanimous lady stepped forward with the assurance that "she would not suffer that any who as God's poor had passed her threshold, in order, in her peaceful little house, quietly to fall asleep, should thence be torn away to the rude gaze of starers, and at last, without kindness or sympathy, be put under the earth. Here shall the departed one remain undisturbed. Public notice can be given of the event. If any demand her who have a nearer claim, then indeed every stranger will be exempted from further obligation; but as the matter now stands, let that person be and remain her last protectress, to whose care Heaven has commended her."

Madame Fonrobert spoke this warmly and rapidly. She was in unwonted excitement; her self-denial had given her new courage. She was quite absorbed in the strange affair, and heeded nothing else. The police-officer bowed respectfully towards her; Herr Etienne occasionally kissed her hand with great emotion. The stranger child beheld all with an air of astonishment. Her striking appearance next excited the observation of those present. Clad in a short petticoat of variegated red silk, thickly quilted and in rich folds, she was leaning against the staves of the hand-barrow. Her black mantelet, drawn about her neck, hung loosely over only one

shoulder, thus displaying a full-flowered bosom-dress, with short sleeves down to the elbows, and fringed with lace. Her wonderfully beautiful thick black hair, glittered with several hair-pins, with which it was fastened together; and this was surmounted by a raised circular gauze cap, such as was wont to be worn at that time by children of distinction. From this mixture of affluence and poverty gleamed a languid, half-opened eye, full of gloomy quiet and mute abstraction. The fine, delicate features were almost motionless, yet betrayed by their expression that sorrow which is too dignified to vent itself loudly. Short and slender, the singular little figure made it doubtful in other respects whether one should call her beautiful and attractive, or only strange and extraordinary. It was, besides, manifest that the poor maiden understood as good as nothing of what was spoken around her; this was clearly shewn when the police-officer, after a short, private conversation with Madame Fonrobert, stepped up to her and asked her whether the woman that had so suddenly died was her mother. The little girl looked embarrassed at Etienne, who complaisantly repeated to her the question in French; to which she replied—

"No, sir; but I never knew any other."

"Who art thou, then, and where is thy home?" he continued.

The child remained mute for some time, while from her fixed staring eyes ran two big tears, without the muscles of her countenance betraying any visible emotion. "Must I answer that?" she then said, firmly and stedfastly. "This one would once have answered for me," she added, softly, and with outstretched hand pointing towards the dead. "Now—" She stopped; her lips quivered, yet she did not weep.

"Confide in me," said the kind Etienne, while at the same time he led her backward a few steps, and urged her to sit down by his side. "Tell me all, my dear child," he whispered to her secretly. "I will then speak for thee; and to those who have a right to inquire more closely after the circumstances of thy life I will communicate what is necessary for them to know, not more—on that you may rely."

The child looked full at him. "I have nothing to conceal," she replied, proudly and drily; "it only troubles me to think on the past, and therefore I do so unwillingly."

Etienne, astonished at the cool and thoughtful answer, contemplated her more closely; and almost uncertain, as it seemed, whether so much earnestness could well abide in the child-like little creature, he asked her, "How old art thou, young maiden? I do not comprehend thee."

"I am going into my eleventh year," she replied, without regarding the flattering import of the question.

"And who art thou? may I further ask?" said Etienne, urgently. "Who were thy parents, and how camest thou hither?"

She sighed, and then said plaintively—"I was born on the battle-field of Minden, where my father fell under the Duke de Broglio, and where my mother, in despair, had followed to look after his corpse. A market-woman brought me up, and has informed me that I am a Colonel's daughter, and that my mother was a German lady." With these words she felt in her pocket, which was skilfully hid beneath the folds of her dress, and drew forth a small packet, from which she carefully unfolded a fine handkerchief, and shewed to Etienne a name inscribed with a Count's coronet. After this she opened the little packet, and took out a bracelet, with the miniature of a fine, manly countenance; which having contemplated awhile, she handed with two descriptive papers to the good-natured man who had declared himself as her protector. Etienne glanced over the papers. One was the poor orphan's certificate of baptism, and contained the names of two families that seemed to forbid the notion of so young a creature living in want and misery. The second paper threw light upon the other. The unfortunate spouse of the handsome foreigner was, on his account, removed from he family; a secret marriage rendered their union equivocal before the world, and she was exiled from her native land. In the deepest anguish of soul, she wrote this to the author of her affliction, whom amid reproach and sorrow she had followed for some little distance, when the news of that disastrous battle overtook her. Concealing the letter in her bosom, she hastened to the battle-field. This and what follows was added in worse handwriting on the margin of the paper—probably the compassionate market-woman had undertaken this task. She had noted that the unfortunate lady had expired by the side of her husband, after giving birth to the child;

that she had confided the latter to her, and that never should little Valerie be forsaken by her.

"Canst thou read?" asked Etienne, folding the papers together.

"Yes," was the short reply.

"And thou knowest—?" he continued, hesitatingly. She nodded assent. "Forget it," said he, beseechingly. "It nought avails thee to remain in this condition wherein thou hast been nurtured." Valerie answered nothing. "But yet do tell me one thing," he said, already on the point of reverting to other matters—"Wert thou always in Germany? or how is it that I see thee here?"

"The good old woman," replied the child, smilingly, "begged for me in France and other parts, where she ought never to have led me. Now she wished to make trial of the great Frederic. The family of my mother belongs to his vassals; but death has destroyed this plan also."

"Forget this too," Etienne again besought her; "forget all!" She answered nothing. He led her back to Madame Fonrobert, to whom he made known the substance of his conversation with Valerie, and induced the compassionate lady to receive her into the house, which put a stop to the police inquiries; and after the interment of the French mendicant, as the deceased woman was called, the occurrence soon came to be forgotten.

Chapter II.

The feverish excitement which, that evening, had set the even-tempered Madame Fonrobert into an almost passionate condition, left a languor which preyed in a distressing manner upon her spirit. That readiness with which she had joined her first act of benevolence to a second, and so added one self-conquest to another, belonged obviously to a strange energy, which, with the incident that produced it, also passed away. The following morning, therefore, brought her a troop of disturbing contemplations, of which one half sufficed to poison the life of the quiet-loving woman. She was ashamed indeed to make known her

feelings: it seemed to her mean and ungenerous to betray untimely regrets over an act of benevolence; yet, scarcely mistress of her inward anguish, she poured forth a flood of bitter tears without revealing the ground of her sorrow. So long as the careful Etienne was occupied with the preparations for the funeral, and for the reception of the new guest, he could pass over her discordant humour; but, with the return of the quiet belonging to his ordinary way of life, it was impossible for him to look silently on such a change. He ventured therefore, one lonely evening-hour, when Valerie was sleeping in Anna's little chamber—he ventured the timid question, "Oh, madam, has any bad news arrived, or has any loss been sustained, to cause you sorrow?" She silently shook her head. "It is doubtless very bold," he continued, "that I should wish to intrude myself into your confidence, but impute it somewhat to the fear that, through some failure, I may have deserved your displeasure; and at least deem me worthy of the favour of some explanation."

"It is not that, my dear Etienne," replied Madame Fonrobert, with weak and tremulous voice, "it is not that; but, as you speak of it, and we are now without burdensome affairs—which, alas! will henceforth seldom be the case—I will venture to tell you. I have feared that we have been too hasty. Yes, I fear that we have imposed upon ourselves a family-cross that will grievously oppress us; and which, Herr Etienne, will crush me to death."

While she spoke, he several times changed colour; and as, at last, tears stifled her voice, he was obliged hastily to take two or three pinches from his box, to refrain himself from weeping with her. "How then," he at length said, "does madam think that little Valerie can wish to be burdensome to her?"

"Burdensome!" she exclaimed. "Ah! that is not the question; that she will and must be by her mere presence. But if that were all —" She ceased. Perhaps she herself knew not further what lay darkly within her mind. Yet suddenly there rose involuntarily to her lips, "See you, Herr Etienne, I have the feeling that this child brings unhappiness to us. I become so anxious when near her, that I know not how to express it. In her large eyes there is something presaging sorrow. Only once contemplate her more closely; hers is surely no child's look. She was

born in an evil hour, upon a bloody bed, amongst the dying. Think only, how many souls must there have fluttered about in unrest, and been by angels and devils snatched away; and, in the midst of the confusion, hers wound its way into the light."

The perplexed book-keeper rose from his chair, in inexpressible embarrassment, and paced up and down, twisting and rubbing his hands. The strange words had excited in him a feeling of aversion and indignation towards the innocent object of his inmost compassion; and yet the more this feeling overpowered him the more he was ashamed of it, and strove against it, which occasioned him infinite suffering. "Besides," Madame Fonrobert continued, "the little unfortunate is, in her singular position, more matured than other children at her age. It is only her form that is undeveloped; and by what a hand has she been cultivated? What principles may she not have imbibed from vulgar associations? Think only what she could learn from such a creature, with what else become acquainted than with what is immodest and untractable. Herr Etienne! Herr Etienne! believe me, this good old house has lost its peace."

"Then we will get rid of the stranger," he exclaimed, overpowered with disquiet and anxiety, yet shocked at the hasty word which consigned to so unhappy a fate one who was quite forlorn.

"That we cannot without injuring ourselves," she observed thoughtfully. "What would the world judge of such an unjust procedure? And how we should lower the poor maiden in the opinion of others!" Etienne felt more calm. "No," continued his old friend, "the matter no longer concerns others. We have been too precipitate, and must now await the end."

This *we* really meant *you*, and was a disguised reproach which the too sensitive Etienne took very pleasantly, but was much vexed therewith in secret. Therefore he kept silence, whilst he once more thought over the matter. Many opposing considerations now hastily occurred to him, which he seemed not before to have sufficiently regarded. What if he really through a single evening should have entailed on the house, which owed to his management its prosperity and peace, a lasting disadvantage, and on his benefactress anxiety and vexation. "I will take the entire burden on myself," said he resolutely. "Valerie shall find in me a father, a teacher, and a pro-

tector; she shall have the little room above on the third floor, which I have so long occupied; the little chamber beside the shop will do for me. The homeless wanderer does not need waiting upon; she has been early schooled by want. By day she shall work with me in the counting-house, and only during the short meal-time need Madame Fonrobert be near her." He immediately made the latter acquainted with his plan, released her from all obligation, and declared himself as ready as he was bound to take it all upon himself. But, to his great astonishment, this did not at all satisfy her. The deadening impression which had fallen upon her had deprived her dull imagination of all its quickening power.

"What will all that avail?" she replied. "What has been, has been: the child will never again be absent from my thoughts."

At the same time she was not unwilling that Valerie should occupy the little upper room, while Etienne should have possession of Herr Fonrobert's, from which since the terror of that evening, the delusive breath of earlier recollections had passed away. A waiting-girl, who now and then attended upon Anna, agreed to have her sleeping-room next to Valerie's chamber. And thus the stranger child was accommodated with the least possible disturbance to the customs of the household. For this she thanked her benefactor from her heart. A stranger to everything, she had no longing for the world; besides, her disturbed frame needed rest. She slept much, and even when awake dreamt of that with which her deceased nurse had filled her childish mind. At table she appeared reserved and distant towards Madame Fonrobert, who to her was almost painfully kind and solicitous; and who, the more she felt discommoded by the approach of her little guest, the more redoubled her attentions towards her. They remained, however, unknown to each other; their intercourse was only kept alive by that which had first originated it, namely, their language.

Valerie long desired to learn German; she had a fine and agreeable manner of expressing herself; the lighter tones of thought glided so smoothly over her lips, and found in the harmonious play of her features an accompaniment that seemed to render both inseparable. Etienne at all times avoided imposing any strange and disturbing notions on the unintelligible child; he therefore let her take her own way, and be as she was, quiet as to herself, buried in

her own feelings, sparing in their expression. What course her education took it would have been difficult to estimate: outwardly, she appeared unchanged; thus she lived for years. She had no play-mates, nor wished for any; nor could she attain any taste for female occupations. Proper hours of study eluded her; yet she knew the most of what is usually taught to girls domestically educated. The habit of sitting the greatest part of the day by the side of Etienne, turning over the stores of the book-shop, and reading historical and poetical works of a religious and moral tendency, raised her above the mechanical condition of a common elementary development. And if, in the confusion of accidental impressions, her notions and judgments lay sometimes disordered, they yet struck out upon a path in which it was very difficult to accompany her. Least could the modest Etienne here follow her, who could only proceed step by step, when he would understand any direction, and whose sensitive mind was sickened by the slightest ebullition of feeling; and therefore he often sought Madame Fonrobert's forgiveness for the haste with which he had recommended the stranger to her generosity. It is true that his attachment daily increased for the lovely and highly-born maiden, in whom, much as he had contemplated her, he had not been able to discover any fault which could reproach him for this inclination; and yet the more his satisfaction arose from Valerie's society, the more ashamed he felt on that account, and the more carefully he measured and regulated his behaviour towards her. Indeed, he held himself aloof just in proportion as he realized the nearness of her presence. Madame Fonrobert, on her part, glad that matters went so favourably for the peace of her household, disturbed no one in ought that kept other considerations away from her. All these circumstances, combined together, caused the soul of Valerie, in the midst of the busy capital, to be as lonesome in the benevolent family, as had she been on a desolate island, where only the echo of her own voice from wild and uncultured nature had struck upon her ear. She might have been about the age of fifteen, when Etienne surprised her one day at a side book-case, containing only German authors; Valerie, a small volume in her hand, was reading without observing him, half aloud, with all the signs of excited

attention, mingled with terror and astonishment, the following words :---

"Ah, see ! ah, see ! I suddenly
Behold a fearful wonder ;
A horseman's raiment all despoil'd,
And torn, and worn asunder ;
His manly head a skull become,
A naked skull ! Ah, frightful doom !
His body, once so full and fair,
A shrivell'd skeleton lies there —"

Etienne interrupted her. "Do you understand what you are reading?" said he. "Since when have you learned German, Mademoiselle Valerie?"

She let fall her hand which held the book, and contemplating with dreamy look the images which then passed before her, she said, "Oh, a long time, Herr Etienne; the old servant always speaks it to me, and lets me read in her song-book; it is quite familiar to me in the hearing, but I express myself awkwardly in the strange language."

"And this frightful poem," continued he. "Who gave it you?"

"I took it myself," she drily replied, adding immediately, "I believe it was written for me. It makes my hair stand on end; my skin is cold as ice, but my heart, Herr Etienne, my heart never beat so warmly as at this moment."

His own heart felt strangely at these words. He perceived something inexplicable as his half-sunk eye met hers with its dark, quivering beam. He started back, as if he had suddenly seen a strange and unknown form stand before him, and endeavoured, under a forced smile, to conceal the aversion which only more strongly influenced him, as she now with passionate inspiration again took up the book, and repeated with elevated tone :—

"Ah, see ! ah, see ! I suddenly—,"

"Lay aside that wild stuff, Mademoiselle," said the agitated Etienne, beseechingly; "you will only bewilder your imagination with it."

"No," replied Valerie; "I can explain it to myself, only hear :—

'Loud wailings from the upper air,
And moanings from beneath;
Leonora's heart with trembling fear
Shook betwixt life and death.'

Say now," asked the agitated maiden; "is not that the history of my mother?" And then, she continued: "Was not thus the hour of my birth?—

> 'And now, amid the shadows pale,
> Beneath the pale moon glance,
> The spectres chant a fearful wail,
> And whirl their horrid dance.' "

"I conjure you," Etienne interrupted her, "throw the book into the fire. It is madness that you are reading. Oh, the imprudent one," he sighed, "to impress on your weak brain such horrible images of the past!"

"Do not blame the old woman," said Valerie; "she has given me here a kind home. And were this only a chamber of death, it is a spot upon the earth," she added, with deep melancholy, "where I feel at peace."

She had, in the meanwhile, concealed the book, without Etienne venturing to hinder her; he only shook his head, and gazed after her as she went up stairs with it to her own chamber. He was obliged to confess that, since her coming into the house, she had not before so unreservedly disclosed her inward mind; but had ever avoided revealing it to a stranger's eye. But now astonished, and ravished by an overwhelming power, the true voice of a wounded and diseased soul had broken forth. Those hard, wild tones were they that had ever struck dumbly within her; at length she had found words for their utterance. The voice of the mother whispered them to her in the proper language.

Etienne involuntarily shuddered at this coincidence of strange occurrences. For the first time, he could not to-day feel right in his simple occupation. With a disturbed mind he took his place later at the dinner-table, opposite Madame Fonrobert. He almost felt thankful that Valerie did not make her customary appearance. She had excused herself from illness, but he could easily guess the true reason, which made him thoughtful and taciturn.

Madame Fonrobert observed the change in him. She probably ascribed it to Valerie's absence, for what fluttered convulsively on her lips, and was betrayed by an inward smile, seldom came out openly, as she generally kept her thoughts to herself. Therefore she only slightly hinted that her table companion had not become

more sprightly, and seemed to be pre-occupied by one exclusive idea.

"It will be agreeable to her," she added, "when she can learn to communicate her thoughts."

At these words he looked at her with astonishment; not understanding her meaning.

"I would," she continued, "that you told me plainly what plans you are projecting. Besides, it were better at once to take the first step, and so spare me the trouble of further inquiries."

"Good God!" exclaimed Etienne, seized with anxious foreboding; "what plans could I form, which in the least could concern my personal interest? And how have I deserved, madam, that you should think me guilty of a secret intention?"

"Gently, my friend, gently," she softly replied; "the zeal which you show for your justification could almost make me mistrustful of your integrity. But I will not disquiet you. The simple question now is, whether you think of occupying, in a short time, the middle story, which since the deceased Herr Fonrobert's time has remained shut up."

"I make a change in your house?" asked the affrighted Etienne, who did not comprehend what she intended.

"I thought," she replied, "if you should marry."

The words died upon his ear; he thought himself dreaming, when she added—

"See! Valerie is grown fully to the age of fifteen; after my death you are my heir. What will you that you delay the period when you may be happy? What I see in the future, I can also endure at the present. And then, at least, I shall have the consolation of knowing that matters will be hereafter as I have directed, and that nothing new will subvert the ancient order."

"Is it possible?" stammered the bookkeeper, in a perplexity which half arose from astonishment, half from inexpressible embarrassment; "is it possible that you deem me guilty, at my age, of so great a folly? Ay, Heaven forbid me from harbouring wishes for which I should only blush! How ungenerous, willingly to consign the blooming young maiden to a sickly, consumptive husband, whose infirm health more weds him to death than to life. No, no, Madame Fonrobert, no more of this, I beg," he added

quickly, as if he could not with sufficient haste dismiss an imagination to whose impression he could pay no regard.

Madame Fonrobert was silent awhile, without showing any signs of surprise at his answer. After a long pause, during which Etienne endeavoured to collect himself, she said calmly—

"Very good, my dear Etienne; but what then will, in the end, become of Valerie? She has appeared to me for some time past more melancholy and reserved than before; she is too lonely here with us."

"Indeed!" responded Etienne, hesitatingly.

"It will then be well," she continued, "for me to accept the offer of my brother-in-law the surgeon, who, with his only daughter is coming to Berlin from Cleves, and who wishes to lodge with me. I would at once have agreed to this, but I wished first to know your intentions; for had you——"

"I am not at all worth considering in any of your arrangements," said he, hastily interrupting her, that he might not again be disquieted with the proposal.

"My niece, Philline, is about the same age as Valerie," observed Madame Fonrobert; "they will teach each other what they mutually require to learn. Much can be regulated in our foster-child, through intercourse with persons of her own age; besides," added she, "the new guests will be welcome to you, my friend, as age is ever taciturn, and Valerie is a dreamer."

He could not but grant this; and as he was glad to see her busied with another object, he obtained leave to write immediately to the surgeon, and to make the necessary preparations for his arrival. The many particulars which the precise lady prescribed for this purpose, and for the security of her own repose, gave her active assistant abundant occupation. He thereby lost sight of the lonely young dreamer, who kept apart in her own little chamber. To his joy, however, he next morning found in its place in the bookcase, the dangerous poem, which he had so unwillingly seen in the hands of the excited maiden; he immediately took it away, and locked it up. Valerie smiled, when afterwards she observed this, but forbore from any remark.

After several weeks, the surgeon arrived with his daughter. He was an earnest, learned man, quite devoted to his studies, of stirring

industry, and untiring investigation. As soon as he had unpacked and arranged his books, his chemical and surgical apparatus, every thing stood in its place; he found his own occupation in a spacious room in the midst of embryos in spirits, skulls, skeletons, and other scientific indispensables, so that his presence in the house was but little noticed.

It was otherwise with Philline. Sprightly as a roe, communicative, sportful, and ever ready to sacrifice herself and friends for a joke; now she pursued her pranks with the old tedious Anna, now with her aunt's Bolognese dog; with her aunt herself, and the pale, coughing, house-spectre, as she was wont to call Etienne, while she spared Valerie, whose coldness affrighted her, and towards whom, therefore, she felt more reluctance than confidence. Their mutual intercourse remained a long time sufficiently restrained. Wearisomeness, at last, induced Philline to seek her young companion in her own little chamber. She found her sitting idly in a corner, and repeating in a loud voice some verses, which her visitor did not at all understand. The thought to play a comedy arose immediately from this incident in the mind of the sportive Philline. She communicated her notion to the other, but as they were entirely without the necessary means and characters, they contented themselves with learning scenes from tragedies (for Valerie liked only the tragical), and reciting them with much pathos before the deaf and silent walls. The scanty pleasure, enlivened neither by the sympathy nor admiration of beholding friends, could be of no long entertainment for the social, sprightly Philline; she was at all times restless and ill at ease in Valerie's little room, and it was only not to disturb her father that she had hitherto resorted thither to unfold her dramatic talent.

Fully content with her accomplishments in the art, she resolved to give both her father and the other members of the household an astonishing proof of it. Valerie was not to be wanting. During the hours when the surgeon took his circuit in the city, the daughter desired to make all preparations for the little festival in her apartment, and for this purpose invited Valerie to accompany her there, which the latter had with singular anxiety avoided; nor could she to-day subdue her reluctance. Alternately changing red and pale, she stammered out excuses, not one of which was compre-

hended by the other, who almost forcibly drew the trembling maiden after her. But scarcely had they approached the door, which was standing open, and which led to the surgeon's room, and scarcely had Valerie cast a single glance therein, than, with distorted countenance, she uttered a terrific cry, and rushed breathless from the spot. Philline, first frightened, then angry, followed her, scolding and blaming, and overwhelmed her with such bitter reproaches, that the former in excited vehemency revealed the reason of her conduct, which she had rather have kept secret, saying, with bewildered look—

"Do with me what you will, but never can I pass the skeletons which grin at me from your father's glass case."

Philline burst out into loud laughter. Familiar with the objects of so great terror, she was as deficient in the notion of it, as in sympathy with the emotion, and she knew not the sad circumstances of Valerie's birth in the field of carnage.

"Is it possible," she exclaimed, "that you are so little above the prejudices of the lower classes as to be overcome in this manner by the impression of what you are not accustomed to?"

"Do not mock me," replied Valerie, deathly pale, and trembling as an aspen leaf; "I cannot help it. Once before, I stood at the same spot, as your father was coming out. I had not time fully to recollect myself. Quick as thought my eye had strayed towards those horrid forms. I carried about with me the sensation of them for days together."

At this Philline again openly laughed in her face. She understood her so little, that she sported in the most heartless manner with the most pitiable of all weaknesses, as she termed the poor maiden's unconquerable aversion, and exposed her to the like blame from all who had any regard to her tale of the laughable incident. Etienne's tender soul suffered much from the strokes of the inexhaustible raillery which befell the object of his protection, yet he ventured not to defend her as his sympathy desired, from fear that the fine texture of her mind might in another way be discomposed by unpleasant emotions. Especially since his last conversation with Madame Fonrobert, had his demeanour towards the young girl been far more circumspect than before. She also but seldom now came into the shop to look for a

book. When on one occasion Etienne remarked this to her, referring at the same time to that poem which had once so much inflamed her, she seemed vexed, and answered him shortly—"that she did not want the volume any more."

This, and similar answers, had quite turned Etienne from his former custom of being her defender on all occasions. He now, therefore, took no part against Philline's attacks, which induced her father to interpose. He felt deeply interested in the extraordinary young creature, through a strange impression which she had made upon him. He said he thought he saw something like a shadow upon her brow, as if by accident a dark body were sportively hovering over her; a phenomenon he had often observed in persons strangely organized, or who were destined by Providence to violent events. With this opinion regarding her, he declared the jestings of his daughter to be ungenerous, indeed, even silly, inasmuch as the peculiar seat of innate aversions can as little be ascertained as that of many secret diseases; and, therefore, such manifestations are rightly no more to be laughed at than are the contortions of spasm.

This medical judgment, far from restraining Philline, only stimulated her spirit of contradiction; and whether it was to revenge herself for the spoiling of her comedy, or by a bold joke, in defiance of opposite counsel, to bring the laugh upon her own side, she resolved, at all hazards, to cure Valerie of her imaginary fears. One Sunday evening, when the old servant slept out at her daughter's, who dwelt outside the gate, Philline contrived during supper, with the help of her own maid, to remove one of the skeletons from her father's closet, and conceal it under Valerie's bed-clothes. Full of the expected result, her merriment rose above all restraint; even Valerie was infected by it, who therefore later than usual retired to her own chamber.

Madame Fonrobert detained her friend Etienne awhile longer. She was agreeably excited by the favourable alteration which she thought she saw in her foster-child, and communicated to her good kinsman her observations thereupon.

"Philline works very well upon Valerie, Herr Etienne," said she, with an air of self-satisfaction; "very well. Did you see, to-day, how unconstrainedly she fell in with the other's wit, and returned

it? I think we may congratulale ourselves upon my resolution of inviting here these pleasant people."

She looked smilingly over to Etienne, who, silent, and listening with the greatest attention to an obscure noise, was standing aside with his face toward the door.

"You do not understand me well?" she abruptly asked; at the same moment, however, starting up from the sofa, and seizing his hands with the words—

"God! my God! what is the matter? You are pale as death!"

"Nothing—nothing!" whispered Etienne; "it is surely nothing; but I thought I heard some one screaming in anguish."

He had scarcely said this, when Philline rushed wildly into the room, with staring look, shrieking vehemently—

"She has lost her senses! Help, Heaven! she is caressing the skeleton, and speaking words of madness to it!"

More was not necessary to drive Etienne to Valerie's chamber. Already before he entered, he heard her in quite an altered tone, more scream than speak. She was repeating in a breath, the horrible ballad, and at the place,

> "Ah, see! ah, see! I suddenly
> Behold a fearful wonder"—

she fell into such a wild ecstacy, that Etienne burst open the door, thinking she would not survive the next moment. He found the unfortunate one erect in bed, and embracing the skeleton in her arms with a joy as if she had now found the happiness of her life. The surgeon, who was present, and who ascertained the particulars from Philline's painful confession, found that, after the ill-planned joke, she had stood before the door to observe Valerie; and seeing her, when undressed, quietly approach her bed, and express no terror nor reluctance, she foreboded some misfortune. Full of anxiety she then entered, and found her pitiably deprived of her senses, softly whispering and playing with the object of her former horror. The surgeon immediately gave up hope; and Etienne soon perceived that she had imagined herself to be her mother, who had again found the long-lamented object of her love. Madame Fonrobert's forebodings were now fully realized. The peace of her house had departed. She herself did not long survive the last blow. The

surgeon also in a short time left the dwelling, in order to rescue his daughter from entire ruin; for, since that evening, health and cheerfulness had both forsaken her. Her father was often heard to repeat, that he had never thought that the bones of a dead warrior, which he had once brought from the battle-field of Minden, could have prevailed over the reason of two maidens.

Etienne was vividly penetrated with these words. Involuntarily, unanswerable questions pressed his spirit, yet he avoided the wish vainly to inquire after the hidden cause of such mysterious connections. He bore his lot quietly and patiently. For long years he remained the possessor of the little house, the lonely supporter of the unhappy Valerie. Her gloomy lamp was every evening seen glimmering from the bow-window. The passer-by sent up to heaven a short prayer for her salvation. She herself sang and toyed with her phantom, till once the moon shone in at the open window, and lightened upon the coffin, in which her bones by the side of those that had been disturbed, found rest and peace.

The Caravan,

and other Tales.

From the German

of

Wilhelm Hauff.

London · James · Burns ·

Contents.

The Caravan 3

Caliph Stork 6

The Spectre Ship 16

The Severed Hand 25

Fatima's Rescue 39

Little Fly 55

The False Prince 70

The Cold Heart 90

RBR
Jan 72
#788
no. 3

p. 17.

Popular Tales.

ONCE upon a time a large caravan was crossing the desert. On that immense plain where nothing is to be seen but the sand and the sky, the bells of the camels and the silver necklaces of the horses might be heard at a great distance; a thick volume of dust in its rear announced its approach, and when a breeze parted the cloud, glittering arms and brightly-spangled garments shone dazzling on the eye. Such was the appearance of the caravan to a man who approached it on its flank. He rode a beautiful Arab, with a saddle-cloth of tiger-skin; on the crimson trappings hung silver bells, and on the head of the courser waved a splendid heron's plume. The rider had a stately bearing, and his garb corresponded with the magnificence of his steed; on his head was a white turban, richly embroidered in gold; his tunic and full trousers were of a bright scarlet, while a richly-hilted scimitar hung at his side. He had slouched his turban over his face, and this and the

black eyes flashing from under his bushy eye-brows, together with the long mustachio hanging under his high-arched nose, gave him a certain look of wildness and of daring. When the rider was about fifty yards only from the van of the cavalcade, he put spurs to his horse, and in a few seconds arrived at the head of the train. So unusual a circumstance was it to see a single rider crossing the desert alone, that the sentinels, fearing an onset, brought their lances to the guard.

"What are you about?" cried the rider, on seeing himself so martially received; "do ye think a single man will attack your caravan?"

The abashed sentinels put their lances in the rest; their leader, however, rode up to the stranger, and demanded his business.

"Who is the master of the caravan?" said the horseman.

"It does not belong to one owner," replied the former; "but consists of a number of merchants, whom we are escorting on their way home from Mecca, because travellers are exposed to annoyance from all sorts of marauders."

"Lead me to the merchants, then," said the stranger.

"That may not be at present," replied the soldier; "because we have to move on without halting, and the merchants are at least a mile in our rear. But if you will ride on with me till we encamp for our noontide repose, I will then do your pleasure."

The stranger made no reply, but drew out a long pipe which he had tied fast to his saddle, and began to smoke in large puffs, riding on by the side of the leader of the van. The latter knew not what to make of him—he did not exactly like to demand his name; and however he tried to lead him into conversation, he yet received no other answer than a short "Yes, yes," to his "You smoke a good tobacco," "Your horse steps well," &c. They at length reached the spot where they were to repose at noon; the leader had placed his people on guard, while he himself kept by the stranger till the caravan should come up. Thirty camels passed on, heavily laden, and led by armed attendants. Next came the five merchants to whom the caravans belonged, mounted on beautiful horses. They were nearly all men of advanced age, with a staid and sober look; though one of them seemed much younger than the rest, and merrier too and more lively. A large number of camels and pack-horses closed the train.

Tents had been pitched, and the camels and horses drawn up

in a circle round them. In the centre stood a large one of blue silk; to this the leader of the escort conducted the stranger. On passing within the curtains of the tent, the five merchants were seen sitting on gold-embroidered cushions, while black slaves presented them with refreshments.

"Whom have you there?" cried the young merchant to the guard.

Before the latter could answer, the stranger addressed them thus—"My name is Selim Baruch, and I am a native of Bagdad, on a journey to Mecca. I was taken prisoner by a band of robbers; and three days ago I clandestinely escaped from captivity. The great prophet granted me to hear the bells of your caravan in the far distance, and by that means I reached you. Allow me to bear you company on your way; you will be bestowing your protection on no unworthy head, and if you ever come to Bagdad I will richly reward your kindness, for I am the nephew of the Grand Vizier."

The eldest of the merchants returned him answer. "Selim Baruch," said he, "welcome to our shade! We rejoice to assist thee; but above all be seated, and eat and drink with us."

Selim Baruch took his place by the merchants, and ate and drank with them. When their repast was over, the slaves removed the service, and brought in long pipes and Turkish sherbet. For a long time the merchants sat silently puffing out grey volumes of smoke, and watching them circle and eddy and then vanish in air; at last the young merchant broke silence—"Thus have we been sitting these three days," said he; "on horseback or at table, without hitting upon anything to beguile the time. Do you know of nothing, my friends, that we can do to amuse ourselves?"

The four elder merchants went on smoking, and seemed wrapt in sober meditation; but the stranger answered—"If you will allow me, I will make you a proposal. It seems to me, that at every encampment one of us might tell the others a tale. This would do very well to pass away the time. And that you may see that the request is a fair one, I will be the first to begin."

Gladly did the five merchants narrow their circle, leaving the centre to the stranger. The slaves replenished the cups, filled their masters' pipes afresh, and brought them burning coals to light them by; and Selim having refreshed his throat with a long draught of sherbet, began the "Story of Caliph Stork."

THE STORY OF CALIPH STORK.

CHUSID, Caliph of Bagdad, was sitting comfortably on his sofa one fine afternoon; he had been dosing a little, for it was a hot day, and he looked quite pleased after his nap. He was smoking a long pipe of rosewood, sipping now and then the coffee poured out by his slave, and stroking his beard complacently, when the beverage was to his taste. In short, you might see that the Caliph was on right good terms with himself. This was the time to address him, when he was always gentle and affable; and so every day, at this hour, he was visited by his Grand Vizier, Mansor. To-day, too, the Vizier came to see him; but, contrary to his usual wont, he looked very thoughtful.

The Caliph took his pipe from his mouth, and said—"Why dost thou make such a grave face, Grand Vizier?"

The Grand Vizier crossed his hands on his breast, bowed down before his master, and answered—"Master, I know not whether I make a grave face or not; but down there by the palace, there is a pedlar standing, and he has such beautiful things, that I am quite vexed not to have much superfluous cash in hand.

The Caliph, who had long wished to give his Vizier a treat, sent his black slave down to fetch up the pedlar. The slave soon returned with him. He was a stout little man, with a swarthy face and tattered clothes; he carried a case full of all kinds of wares, pearls and rings, richly-mounted pistols, cups and combs. The Caliph and his Vizier examined everything narrowly, and the Caliph at last bought beautiful pistols for himself and Mansor, and a comb for the Vizier's wife. But just as the pedlar was going to close his pack, he caught sight of a little drawer, and asked if it contained anything besides.

The pedlar opened it, and discovered a box of blackish powder, and a curiously written paper, which neither the Caliph nor Mansor could read.

"I got these two articles of a merchant who found them in the streets of Mecca," said the pedlar, "but I don't know what they contain; you are welcome to them for a trifle, for they are of no use to me."

The Caliph, who was fond of having old manuscripts in his library, though he could not read them, bought both writing and box, and dismissed the man. "But," thought he, "I should like to know what the writing is about." So he asked the Vizier if he knew no one who could decipher it.

"Most gracious lord and master," replied the latter, "a man lives near the great mosque, who is called Selim the Learned. He understands all languages; send for him now, and he will perhaps he able to read these mystic characters."

The learned Selim was soon at hand.

"Selim," said the Caliph, "people say thou art very learned; just give a look at this writing, and see if thou canst read it. If thou canst, thou shalt have a new garment from me for feast days, and if thou canst not, thou shalt have twelve slaps on the cheek, and five-and-twenty bastinadoes on the soles of thy feet; for thou canst no longer be called Selim the Learned."

Selim bowed himself, and said—"O master, thy will be done!" For a long time he pored over the manuscript, but of a sudden he cried out—"This is Latin!"

"Tell me what it is about," said the Caliph, imperiously; "if it be Latin."

Selim began to translate as follows:—"Man, who findest this, praise Allah for his goodness. Whoever takes a pinch of the powder in the box, and says *Mutabor*, may change to any animal he pleases, and understand too the language of the brutes. If he wish to resume the human form, he must bow thrice to the east, and repeat the word. But beware of laughing when thou art transformed, or the spell-word will vanish from thy memory, and thou wilt remain a brute."

Now when Selim the Learned had finished reading, the Caliph was beyond measure overjoyed. He made the wise man swear to tell no one the secret, presented him with a beautiful garment, and dismissed him. Then turning to his Grand Vizier, "That I call a good bargain, Mansor," said he; "how pleased I am with the thought of becoming a brute! Be with

me early to-morrow morning—then we will go into the country together, take a little pinch from the box, and listen to what they say in the air, and in the water, in forest and in field!"

Scarcely had Caliph Chusid dressed and breakfasted on the morrow, when his Grand Vizier appeared, as he had been ordered, to accompany him on his walk. The Caliph put the box of magic powder in his sash, and commanding his retinue to stay behind, he set off alone with the Grand Vizier. First they passed through his spacious gardens, looking in vain for a living thing that might enable them to try the charm. At length the Vizier proposed their going further towards a tank, where he had often seen a number of animals, especially storks; and these had always excited his curiosity by their grave demeanor and chattering.

The Caliph was pleased with his Vizier's proposal, and went with him towards the tank. On reaching it, they saw a stork pacing gravely up and down, searching for frogs, and now and then chattering to himself. At the same moment they beheld another stork high up in the air come swooping down to the spot.

"I'll venture my beard, gracious master," said the Grand Vizier, "these two longshanks are having a pretty chat together. What do you say to our turning storks?"

"Well said," answered the Caliph; "but first we'll think a moment how we are to turn men again. Ah! I have it! Bow thrice to the east, and say 'Mutabor,' and then I'm Caliph again and you Vizier. But remember! no laughing, or we are lost!"

While he thus spoke, the Caliph saw the other stork hovering over their heads, and then slowly lighting on the ground. In a trice he drew the box from his sash, took a good pinch, handed it to the Grand Vizier, who took one too, and both of them called out 'Mutabor!'

Then their legs shrunk in, turning thin and red; their beautiful yellow slippers changed to the ungraceful feet of storks, their arms became wings, their necks shot up from their shoulders to the length of an ell, their beards vanished, and white plumage covered their bodies.

"You've a pretty bill, Mr. Grand Vizier," said the Caliph, after a long pause of astonishment. "By the beard of the Prophet, I never saw the like in all my life before!"

"My most humble thanks to you," replied the Grand Vizier, bowing; "but if I might be so bold, I should say, your Highness looks almost prettier as a stork than as a Caliph. But

come along, if it be your pleasure to listen to our comrades there, and see whether we really know their language."

In the mean-while the other stork had settled. He cleaned his legs with his bill, laid his feathers straight, and made off to the first one. But the two new birds made haste to get near them; when, to their astonishment, they overheard the following conversation:—

"Good morning, Mrs. Longleg, what so early in the meadows?"

"Thank you kindly, my dear Clapperbill! I've only been getting myself a bit of breakfast. Will you take the shoulder of a lizard, or the leg of a froglet?"

"My most humble thanks; but to-day I've not a morsel of appetite. Besides I've come to the meadows on very different business. I'm to dance this evening before my father's guests; and so I want to practise a little in quiet here."

On this the young stork swaggered grotesquely over the field. The Caliph and Mansor watched her in astonishment; but when she poised herself picturesquely on one foot, and flapped her wings with an attempt at grace, they were masters of themselves no longer, and a hearty fit of laughter burst from their bills. They were some time in recovering themselves. The Caliph did so first, crying, "Well that was a joke once in a way that no gold could pay for; what a pity the stupid animals were scared by our laughter, or else they would have sung too to a certainty."

But now it occurred to the Grand Vizier that laughing during the transformation was forbidden. He communicated his fears to the Caliph. "By Mecca and Medina! a pretty joke it would be, if I were obliged to remain a stork! Do try to think of the stupid word—I can't get at it!"

"We must bow to the east, and say 'Mu—Mu—Mu—.'"

They turned to the east, and went on bowing till their bills almost touched the earth. But, oh, misery! the spell-word had escaped them; and often as the Caliph bowed, and longingly at his Vizier too cried 'Mu—Mu—,' yet every spark of recollection had vanished, and the poor Chusid and Mansor were and remained—storks.

The spell-bound pair wandered sadly over the fields, quite at a loss what to do in their misery. They could not get out of their stork skin, nor return to the town and make themselves known; for who would have believed a stork, if he had said he was a Caliph? And even if the people of Bagdad had believed it, would they have liked a stork for their ruler?

So they sneaked about many days, gaining a miserable sustenance from the fruits of the field; though their long bills prevented them eating with comfort: while for lizards and frogs they had no appetite at all, for they were afraid of disordering their stomachs. Their only pleasure in this unhappy condition was that they could fly; and so they often went off to the roofs of Bagdad, to see what was going on.

For the first few days they noticed a great deal of disquietude and mourning in the streets; but about the fourth day after their transformation, as they were sitting on the Caliph's palace, they beheld a magnificent pageant in the streets below. Drums and fifes sounded, a man in a scarlet mantle embroidered with gold sat on a gaily caparisoned horse, surrounded by a brilliant equipage; half the city followed in his train, crying, "Hail Mizra, Ruler of Bagdad!"

The two storks on the palace stared at each other, and Chusid said—"Can you guess now why I was enchanted, Grand Vizier? This Mizra is the son of my mortal enemy, the mighty magician, Cashnur; who, in an evil hour, swore vengeance on me. But still I do not give up all for lost. Come along with me, faithful companion of my misfortune, we will take a pilgrimage to the grave of the Prophet; and, perhaps, on that holy spot the spell will be broken."

They rose from the roof of the palace, and flew off in the direction of Medina.

But their flying was not quite the thing, for they had as yet had very little practice.

"O Master," said the Grand Vizier, after a couple of hours' flight, "with your permission I must beg to give in now; for you fly much too fast for me. Besides it is already evening, and we should do well to seek accommodation for the night."

Chusid yielded to his Vizier's petition; and as they could descry in the valley below a ruin, which promised them shelter, thither they bent their course. The place where they lighted for the night appeared formerly to have been a royal palace. Beautiful pillars emerged from the ruins, and several apartments in tolerably good preservation testified to the vast magnificence of the building.

Chusid and his companion threaded the corridors, in search of some dry spot or other, when of a sudden the stork Mansor stood stock still: "Lord and master," said he in a low whisper, "if it were foolish in a Grand Vizier, and still more so of a stork, to be afraid of ghosts, I should not scruple to confess

that I feel very uncomfortable just now; for close by here I distinctly heard sighing and groaning."

The Caliph now stood still too, and caught the sound of a low sobbing, which seemed rather that of a human being than of an animal. With expectation on the stretch, he was making for the place whence the tones of sorrow issued, when the Vizier seized him by the wing with his bill, and implored him not to rush into new and unknown perils; but it was all in vain. The Caliph, who maintained a brave heart under his stork wings, tore away with the loss of a few feathers, and hastened into a dark passage. He soon reached a door that seemed only ajar, through which he could distinctly hear sighs and a low wailing. He pushed the door open with his bill, but stood still in utter amazement on the threshold. In the dilapidated apartment sparely lighted by a small lattice, he beheld a large screech-owl sitting on the floor. The big tears flowed fast from her large round eyes, and in a hoarse voice she vented her lamentations from out her crooked beak. But at the sight of the Caliph and his Vizier, who also had sneaked up by this time, she uttered a loud cry of joy. Gracefully did she wipe away the tears from her eyes with her dappled wing, and cried out to the astonishment of the pilgrims, in sterling good Arabic, "Welcome, storks! you are a good omen of release to me, for I once heard it prophecied that storks were to bring me a great piece of good fortune!"

As soon as the Caliph had recovered from his astonishment, he bowed with his long neck, brought his legs into an elegant position, and said, "Screech-owl, by what you say I may suppose I see in you a companion of my sufferings; but, alas! your hope of obtaining release by our means is all in vain; you will at once acknowledge our helplessness when you hear our story."

The screech-owl begged he would tell it her, and the Caliph proceeded to relate what we already know.

When he had given the owl his story, she thanked him heartily, saying, "Listen to my tale too, and hear that I am not less miserable than yourself. My father is the King of India, and I, unfortunate I, his only daughter, am named Lusa. That magician, Cashnur, who enchanted you, plunged me too into misfortune. One day, he came to my father, and begged my hand for his son Mizra; but my father, who is a violent man, had him kicked down stairs. The wretch managed to gain access to me in another form; and once, as I was seeking refreshment in my garden, he presented me, in the disguise of

a slave, a beverage which transformed me into this loathsome figure. Swooning with dismay, he carried me hither, and shouted in my ears with a terrible voice, 'Here shalt thou remain in thy ugliness, spurned even by the brute animals, to the day of thy death, or till some one voluntarily woos thee to be his spouse in this degraded form. Thus do I revenge myself on thee and thy haughty father.'

"Many months have passed since then. In lone and sad seclusion I live within these walls, abhorred by the world, and a horror to the very animals. The beauty of nature is debarred me, for I am blind by day, and it is only when the moon sheds her pale light upon these ruins that the darkening veil falls from my eyes."

The owl ended, and wiped her eyes with her wing, for the recital of her sufferings had elicited tears.

The Caliph had been sometime in profound thought after the princess had told her tale. "If I am not utterly deceived," said he at length, "there exists a secret affinity in our misfortunes; but where am I to find the key to the riddle?"

The owl answered, "Oh, sire, I have the like presentiment, for once a wise woman prophesied in my early youth that a stork would bring me great good fortune, and I think I know how we may save ourselves."

The Caliph was greatly surprised, and asked what she meant.

"The magician who has made us both wretched," said she, "comes once a month to these ruins. Not far from this room there is a saloon; there he is used to carouse with some of his comrades: I have often listened to them before now. At such times they tell each other of their infamous doings; and on an occasion of the kind he may perchance pronounce the spell-word which you have forgotten."

"Oh, dearest princess," cried the Caliph, "say on; when will he be here, and where is the saloon?"

The owl was silent a moment, and then she said, "Do not take it unkind of me, but only on one condition can I grant your wish."

"Speak, speak," cried Chusid, vehemently; "command me, make what condition you like."

"It is this: I should like to be released too; but this can only be if one of you will bestow his hand upon me."

The storks seemed somewhat embarrassed at the proposal, and the Caliph beckoned his servant to step out with him a moment.

"Grand Vizier," said he, when they were outside the door, "this is a blind bargain, but you might just as well take her."

"Indeed!" replied Mansor; "what, and have my wife scratch my eyes out when I go home! Besides, I am an old man, and you are still young and single, and can better afford to bestow your hand on a beautiful young princess."

"There's where it is," said the Caliph, with a sigh, while he sorrowfully dropped his wings; "who tells you she is young and beautiful? That I call buying a pig in a poke!"

They mutually tried for a long time to talk each other over, but at length, as the Caliph saw that his Vizier would rather remain a stork than marry the owl, he resolved upon fulfilling the condition himself. The owl was overjoyed: she confessed they could not have come more opportunely, because in all probability the magicians would meet that very night.

Accordingly, she left the apartment with the storks, in order to lead them to the saloon: they went for a long while up a dark passage, when, at last, a bright light shone upon them from behind one of the half-mouldering walls. On reaching the spot, the owl advised them to keep quite quiet. Through the gap near which they stood, they had a view of a large saloon. It was adorned all round with pillars and the most costly decorations. A vast number of coloured lamps superseded the light of day. In the centre of the hall stood a round table amply loaded with exquisite viands. A sofa, on which eight men were seated, encircled it. In one of these men the storks recognised the pedlars who sold them the enchanted powder. His neighbour called on him for a recital of his newest exploits. Among others, he told the story of the Caliph and his Vizier.

"What word then did you give them?" inquired a brother magician of him.

"A regular hard Latin one—'Mutabor.'"

When the storks heard this from the gap in the wall, they were almost beyond themselves for joy. They ran along so quickly on their long legs to the gate of the ruin, that the owl could scarcely follow. Then the Caliph said, with emotion, to the owl, "Preserver of my life, and of the life of my friend, as an eternal acknowledgment of what you have done for us, take me to be your consort." So saying he turned to the east.

Thrice did the storks bow their long necks to the sun, that was just rising behind the hills. "Mutabor," cried they. In a twinkling they were changed; and in the deep transport of

newly-bestowed life, master and servant lay laughing and weeping in each other's arms. But what words can describe their astonishment when they looked round? A beautiful lady, in splendid attire, stood before them. With a smile she gave her hand to the Caliph. "Do you know your screech-owl no more?" said she, for such she really was; and the Caliph was so enraptured with her beauty and grace, that he cried out it was the greatest happiness of his life his having turned stork.

Without further delay, the whole three set off in the direction of Bagdad. The Caliph found not only his snuff-box in his clothes, but his purse as well; so he brought everything necessary for their journey in the next village; and in this way they soon reached the gates of the city. There the arrival of the Caliph excited the greatest astonishment: he had been given out for dead, and so the people were highly delighted to see their beloved ruler once more.

All the more violent was the outburst of their hatred against the impostor Mizra. They marched to the palace, and took the old magician and his son prisoners. The Caliph despatched the old man to the same room in the ruins which the princess had tenanted as owl, and had him hung there. But the son, who knew nothing of his father's arts, had the choice of dying or taking the snuff. As he chose the latter, the Grand Vizier handed him the box. One good pinch, and the Caliph's spell-word transformed him into a stork. The Caliph had him shut up in an iron cage, and placed in his garden.

Long and happily lived Caliph Chusid with his consort the princess: his merriest hours were always when the Grand Vizier visited him of an afternoon; then they often talked of their stork adventure; and when the Caliph was full of fun, he condescended to mimic the Grand Vizier in his character of stork. He would stride gravely up and down the room, with his legs quite stiff, chattering, and flapping his arms like wings, and showing how Mansor turned in vain to the east, and cried "Mu, mu, mu." This show was always a great treat to the Lady Caliph and her children; but when Chusid kept on chattering and bowing, and screaming "Mu, mu, mu" too long, the Vizier would smile, and threaten to tell the Lady Caliph what they talked about at the Princess Screech-owl's door.

When Selim Baruch had ended his story, the merchants ex-

pressed themselves very much pleased with it. "Really," said one of them, pushing aside the curtains of the tent, "the afternoon has passed without our knowing it. The evening breeze blows cool; we might very well get over a good bit of our road."

His companions assented. The tents were struck, and the caravan set out in the same array it had come up in. They rode on nearly the whole night, for the days were sultry, but the nights refreshing and starlight. At length they reached a convenient place for encamping, pitched their tents, and laid down to rest. But the merchants provided for the stranger as if he were their dearest guest. One gave him a cushion, another coverlets, a third furnished him with slaves; in short, he was as well attended to as if he had been at home. The hotter hours of noon had already begun when they rose again, and they unanimously resolved on awaiting there the close of evening. When they had dined together, they again narrowed their circle, and the young merchant turning to the eldest of them, said, "Selim Baruch afforded us a pleasant afternoon yesterday; what do you say Achmet to your telling us something, either out of your long life, which must have a good store of adventures, or some amusing tale?"

Achmet was silent awhile, as if he were in doubt whether he should tell this or that, or not; at last he replied, "Dear friends, you have proved yourselves faithful fellows on this journey of ours; and Selim, too, deserves my confidence; so I will relate you something out of my own life;—a tale which I am not fond of telling every one: it is the "Story of the Spectre Ship."

THE STORY OF THE SPECTRE SHIP.

My father had a little shop in Balsora: he was neither poor nor rich, and was one of those people who are not fond of venturing anything, from fear of losing the little that they have. He brought me up plainly and properly, and soon made me capable of lending him a helping hand. Just as I was eighteen years of age, and he was about making his first speculations of consequence, he died, probably of regret, at having entrusted a thousand pieces of gold to the sea. I soon had occasion to esteem him happy in his death, for in a few weeks news arrived that the vessel in which he had embarked his goods had foundered. This disaster, however, could not damp my youthful spirit. I turned everything my father had left me into money, and went forth to try my luck abroad, accompanied only by an old servant of his, who for old attachment's sake would not part from me and my fortunes. We embarked with a favourable wind in the port of Balsora. The ship in which I had taken my passage was bound for India. We had followed the usual track for fifteen days, when the Captain announced the approach of a storm. He made a very serious face, for it seemed he was not sufficiently acquainted with the Channel in those parts to meet a gale with composure. He had all the sails taken in, and we drifted quite slowly along. Night had closed; it was light and cold, and the Captain was beginning to think he had been deceived in the indications of the squall: when all at once a ship, which we had not before observed, shot close past us; and wild shouting and huzzaing sounded from the deck, which not a little astonished me at that fearful hour before the tempest. But the Captain at my side turned as pale as death. "My ship is lost!" cried he; "there sails Death!"

Before I could ask him the meaning of this singular exclamation, the sailors came running up, screaming and shrieking—

"Did you see him? Did you see him? It's all over with us now!"

The Captain, however, had consolatory verses read from the Koran, and took the helm himself; but all in vain. The storm rose perceptibly, and before the lapse of an hour, the ship struck and grounded. The boats were put out, and scarcely had the last sailor escaped, when the vessel sank before our eyes, and I was launched a beggar on the sea. But our misery did not end here. The storm raged more terribly, and it was impossible to manage the boat. I had twined my arms fast round my old servant, and we vowed never to leave each other. At last day broke, but, with the first blush of morning, the wind caught our boat and capsized it. I never saw any more of my shipmates. The shock had stunned me, and on waking I found myself in my faithful old servant's arms, who had saved himself on the capsized boat, and dragged me to him. By this time the gale had abated. No more was to be seen of our ship; though not far from us we descried another, towards which the current was drifting us. On nearing it I recognised the vessel to be the same that had sailed by us in the night, and which had thrown the captain into such a state of alarm. I felt a strange sensation of horror at the sight of this bark. The captain's expressions, which had been so fearfully confirmed, the desolate look of the vessel, on which no one was to be seen, come as near or call as loudly as we would, all this terrified me. However, it was our only hope of safety, so we magnified the Prophet who had o wonderfully preserved us.

From the prow of the ship hung a long cable. With our hands and feet we paddled towards it, and tried to lay hold of it. At last we succeeded. I raised my voice aloud, but still all remained silent in the vessel. We then climbed up the cable; I, as the younger, going first. But, horror of horrors! what a scene presented itself when I stepped on deck. The planks were red with blood; from twenty to thirty corpses, in Turkish habits, were lying on the ground; and at the mainmast stood a man richly dressed, with sabre in hand, but with a face pale and distorted, and his forehead pierced by a large nail, which pinned him to the mast. He, too, was dead.

Fear riveted me to the spot; I scarcely dared to breathe. At last my companion came up; he, too, was awe-struck at the sight of the deck, which presented nothing living, but only so many ghastly corpses. In torture of spirit we called upon the

Prophet, and then ventured to proceed further. At every step we looked about, in expectation of beholding some more fearful novelty, but all remained as before; far and wide, nothing told of life but ourselves and the ocean. We did not even dare to speak aloud, for fear the dead captain that was pinned to the mast should turn his glassy eyes on us, or one of the corpses move his head. After some time, we reached a ladder which led to the hold; here we involuntarily stopped, and looked each other in the face, for neither of us ventured to give utterance to his thoughts.

"O master," said my faithful servant, "here have been terrible doings; yet even if the ship below there be choke full of murderers, I will rather surrender myself to their mercy than live any longer among these corpses."

I thought as he did; so we took heart, and descended with expectation on the stretch. But here all was still as death; not a sound but that of our steps on the ladder. We reached the door of the cabin; I put my ear to it, and listened; but nothing was to be heard. I opened it. The room had an appearance of disorder; clothes, arms, and other articles lay in promiscuous confusion. Nothing was in its place. The crew, or at least the captain, must have been carousing not long before, for everything was lying about. We went from hold to hold, from cabin to cabin, and everywhere found splendid stores of silk, pearls, sugar, &c. I was beyond myself for joy at the sight; for, as there was no one on board, I thought I might appropriate all to myself. Ibrahim, however, reminded me that we were probably very far from land, which we should never be able to reach of ourselves without human aid.

We refreshed ourselves with the viands and liquors, which we found ready to hand in rich profusion, and at last went above again. But here we shuddered at the ghastly sight of the corpses. We resolved to get rid of them and throw them overboard; but how awful were our sensations on finding that not one of them would stir! They lay as if fast spell-bound to the flooring, and we should have had to raise the planks of the deck to remove them; but for this purpose we had no tools. Neither could we loose the captain from the mast, nor wrest his sabre from his cold stiff hand. We passed the day in sad contemplation of our sorrowful plight, and as night came on I allowed old Ibrahim to lie down to sleep, while I kept watch on deck and maintained a look out for some means of escape.

The moon at last rose, and I calculated by the stars that it must be about eleven o'clock, when such an irresistible desire to sleep overcame me that I involuntarily fell back behind a cask on the deck. It was more stupor however than sleep, for I distinctly heard the sea beating against the sides of the ship, and the sails chafing and whistling in the wind. Suddenly I fancied I heard voices and footsteps on deck; I tried to rise to see what it was, but an invisible power held my limbs in thrall, I could not even open my eyes. Clearer and clearer sounded the voices; I thought a merry crew must be moving about. Sometimes I thought I could distinguish the sonorous voice of a commander, and I distinctly heard ropes and sails pulled up and down. But by degrees my senses left me; I fell into a deep sleep, during which I seemed to hear nothing but the clash of arms; and I did not awake before the sun was high in the meridian, and shining scorchingly on my face. In astonishment I looked about me; the storm, the ship, the dead, all I had heard in the past night seemed to me a dream, but when I looked up again everything was as on the day before. The dead lay immoveable; the captain was immoveably pinned to the mast. I laughed at my dream, and got up to call my old servant.

I found him sitting in deep thought in the cabin. "O, master," cried he, on my entering, "I would rather make my bed in the deepest abyss of the sea, than pass another night in this bewitched vessel.." I inquired the cause of his trouble, and he answered me thus:—"When I had slept a few hours, I awoke, and heard people running backwards and forwards overhead. I thought at first it was you, but there were at least twenty of them scampering about; and I heard them calling and screaming. At last heavy steps came down stairs. Then all consciousness deserted me; apprehension returning only at intervals for a moment or two, when I saw the same man who is nailed to the mast up above sitting at that table, singing and drinking; and the one in the scarlet coat, that lies not far from him on the ground, sat by him and helped him with his liquor." Such was my old servant's report.

You may very well imagine, my friends, that all this made me anything but comfortable; for it was no illusion; I had heard the dead men myself. To be sailing in such company was dreadful.

My Ibrahim in the mean time was immersed in profound meditation. "Now I have it!" exclaimed he at last. The fact

was, he had hit upon a charm in verse, which his grandfather, an experienced man and a great traveller, had taught him; and which was said to be of avail against spirits and enchantment. Moreover, he said he knew how to keep off the unnatural sleep that had befallen us; namely, by our zealously repeating verses from the Koran. The old man's proposal pleased me, and in anxious expectation we saw the approach of night.

Now there was a little room near the cabin, and to this we resolved to retire; we bored a number of holes in the door, large enough to afford a full view of the adjoining apartment: we then barred it up as well as we could, and Ibrahim wrote the name of the Prophet in all four corners. Thus we awaited the terrors of the night.

It might be about eleven o'clock again, when I began to feel a strong inclination to sleep; my companion therefore advised me to say a few verses from the Koran, which really was of assistance to me. All at once there seemed to be life above us; the ropes creaked, footsteps passed across the deck, and several voices might easily be distinguished. We had sat thus for some minutes, with expectation on the full stretch, when we heard something coming down the cabin-stairs, and the door flew open. In came that tall, stately man, whom I had seen pinned to the mainmast; the nail was still in his forehead, but the sword he had sheathed. Another followed close behind him, in less costly apparel; I had seen him too lying with the rest on deck. The captain, for he was not to be mistaken, had a pale face, a large black beard, and wildly rolling eyes, with which he looked all round about the room. I could see him quite distinctly as he passed our door, though he seemed to take no notice of our hiding-place. They both took their seats at the table in the middle of the cabin, and talked loud, almost screaming in fact, in an unknown tongue. They grew more and more noisy and heated; and the captain at last struck the table with his clenched fist till the cabin rang again; then, with a wild laugh, the other sprang up, and beckoned him to follow him. The latter rose, tore his sabre from its sheath, and they both left the room.

We breathed more freely when they were gone, but our torments were not near at an end; they grew noisier and noisier on deck; we could hear them hurrying to and fro, and screaming, laughing, and howling. At last they set up a truly hellish din; so that we thought the deck, sails, and all were coming down upon us; there was the clash of arms too, and shouting, and

then all at once a deep silence. After the lapse of several hours, when we ventured to go above, we found all as before; not one of them had changed the position he lay in, and all of them were as stiff as ice.

In this state we passed several days on board the ship, and all this time it kept an eastward course, in which direction, as I calculated, land would be; but, many miles as it ran by day, by night it seemed to measure back its course, for we always found ourselves on the same spot at sunrise. We could not otherwise explain this than by supposing that the dead crew sailed back every night with a fair wind. Now to guard against this we took all the sails in before night, and applied the same counter-spell as at the cabin-door; we wrote the name of the Prophet on parchment, and the charm that Ibrahim learnt of his grandfather to the bargain, and twisted it round the furled sails. Anxiously did we await the result in our little cuddy. The ghosts seemed to be more riotous this time than before; but, lo and behold, the next morning the sails were still furled as we had left them. We only hoisted such sails as were necessary to bear the ship gently forward, and so in the space of five days we had got over a considerable track.

At length, on the morning of the sixth, we discovered land at no great distance, and we thanked Allah and the Prophet for our wonderful preservation. We coasted along for that day, and the following night, and on the seventh morning we fancied we could discern a town not far off: with great difficulty we let go an anchor, which immediately held, put out a small boat that was on deck, and rowed with all our might towards the town. In half-an-hour we made a river, which emptied itself into the sea, and then went ashore. At the gate of the town we inquired its name, and learnt that it was an Indian town, not far from the place I at first wished to arrive. So we repaired to a caravansary, and refreshed ourselves after our eventful voyage. There too I inquired for a cunning and intelligent man, letting the landlord know that I should like one who understood something of magic. He led me into a back street, and knocked at the door of an obscure house; I was told to enter, and directed simply to ask for Muley.

In doors, a little old man, with a grey beard and a long nose, came up to me, and inquired my business. I told him I came in quest of the wise Muley, and he answered that he was the same. I asked his advice as to what I should do with the dead bodies, and how I should manage to get them out of the ship.

He told me, that very probably the crew had been spell-bound on the sea, for some outrage or other they had committed; but he thought the enchantment might be broken by bringing them to land; this, however, would be impossible, without taking up the planks on which they lay; that by the laws of God and man the ship, with its whole cargo, belonged to me, because I had found it, as it were; yet I had better keep all this a profound secret, just making him a little present out of my abundance, and then he would help me with his slaves to get rid of the dead. I promised him a rich reward, and we set off with five slaves, well supplied with saws and hatchets. On our way, Muley, the magician, could not sufficiently commend the happy device of binding verses of the Koran round all the sails. He said this was the only means of saving ourselves.

It was pretty early when we reached the ship. We set to at once, and in an hour's time four of them were already in the boat. Two or three of the slaves had to row ashore to bury them; but they came back and told us that the corpses had saved them the trouble of that, by turning to dust the moment they were laid on the earth. We continued sawing away the bodies, and before evening all of them had been brought ashore. One only remained on board, namely, the man who was nailed to the mast; in vain did we try to draw the nail, all our strength was insufficient to make it stir even a hair's-breadth. I was quite at a loss what to do, for we could not cut away the mast to get the man ashore. Muley, however, helped us out of this dilemma. He ordered a slave to be quick, and row to land for a potful of earth. When this had been fetched, the magician pronounced some mystic rhyme over it, and then poured the earth on the head of the corpse. In a moment it opened its eyes, fetched a long gasp, and the wound on its forehead began to bleed. We now easily drew the nail, and the wounded man sank into the arms of a slave.

"Who brought me hither?" said he, after he had somewhat come to again.

Muley pointed to me, and I stepped up to him.

"Thanks to thee, stranger," said he; "thou hast released me from a long round of torments. For fifty years my body has been coursing these waves, and my soul been condemned to return to it every night; but my head has now touched earth, and I can go in reconciliation to my fathers."

I begged him to tell us how he had come to this dreadful pass, and he answered—

"Fifty years ago, I was a man of power and consideration, and dwelt in Algiers. The lust of gain led me to fit out a vessel and engage in piracy. I had plied this craft for a time, when I one day took a dervise on board at Zante, who wished for a free passage. My comrades and I were rough fellows, and cared very little about the sanctity of the man, but rather jested and jeered at him. Now once, when in holy zeal he was rebuking me for my sinful course, anger got the better of me, in my cabin, where I had been drinking somewhat largely with my pilot. Furious at what the dervise had said, I rushed on deck, and plunged my poignard into his breast. With his dying breath he cursed me and my crew, denying us either life or death till we should lay our heads on earth. The dervise died, and we threw him into the sea, and laughed at his threats; but that very night his words were fulfilled. A part of my crew mutinied against me. The combat was maintained with fearful fury till my followers were killed and I nailed to the mast; but the mutineers, too, died of their wounds, and so my ship soon became one large grave. The film, too, came over my eyes, I breathed hard, and I thought I was dying; but it was only a cold numbness that seized me. The next night, at the very same hour that we had thrown the dervise into the sea, I and all my shipmates awoke; life had returned to us; but we could do and say nothing but what we had done and said on that fatal night. So have we been sailing on for these fifty years, able neither to live nor to die: for how were we to reach land? In maddening joy we used to drive along with full canvass before the storm, in the hope of going to pieces on some cliff or other, and laying our weary heads to rest at the bottom of the sea. But nothing would do. Now, however, I shall die. Once more receive my thanks, unknown preserver; and if treasures can reward thee, take my ship as a token of my gratitude."

So saying, the captain dropped his head upon his breast, and expired; and in a moment, just like his companions, he fell to dust. This we collected in a small box, and buried it on the shore. I then sent for workmen from the town, who put my ship in good repair; and having, at a great profit, bartered the merchandize I had on board for other goods, I hired sailors, made a rich present to my friend Muley, and embarked for my own country. However, I took a circuitous track, touching at many islands and mainlands to find a market for my wares. The Prophet blessed my enterprize; and in nine months I put into Balsora as rich again as the dying captain had made me.

I now settled down in peace and quiet; but every five years I take a journey to Mecca, to thank the Prophet on holy ground for his goodness, and to pray him to take the captain and his crew into his paradise.

The next day the caravan had pursued its route without impediment; and, after they had refreshed themselves at their resting-place, Selim, the stranger, began to speak thus to Muley, the youngest of the merchants:—

"You are, to be sure, the youngest of us, yet you are always cheerful; and I am sure you have some long tale or other for us. Come, let us have it now, and cheer us up after the heat of the day."

"I should be heartily glad to tell you anything that might amuse you," answered Muley, "but youth should be modest in all things; so my elder fellow-travellers must take precedence. Zaleucus, now, is always so grave and reserved: mightn't he tell us what makes him so serious always? Perhaps we may be able to ease his sorrow, if such he have; for we are glad to be of service to a brother, even if he be of another faith."

The person called upon was a Greek merchant, of middle age, handsome, and powerfully formed, but very grave. Although he was an unbeliever—that is, not a Mussulman—yet his road-companions were fond of him; for his whole bearing had inspired them with respect and confidence. For the rest of the matter, he had only one hand; and some of his fellow-travellers thought it was this which made him so grave.

To Muley's friendly challenge Zaleucus replied, "I feel myself highly honoured by your confidence, and will relate you something in vindication of myself, if I appear more sombre than other people. You see I have lost my left hand. Connected with this is the tale I am about to relate; and whether I have cause for melancholy or not, you shall decide when you have heard the "Story of the Severed Hand."

THE STORY OF THE SEVERED HAND.

I WAS born in Constantinople. My father was a dragoman at the Porte, and carried on a pretty lucrative trade in fragrant essences and silken stuffs. He gave me a good education, partly teaching me himself, and partly entrusting me to the tuition of one of our priests. He at first intended me to succeed to his shop; but, as I displayed greater abilities than he had expected, he decided, by the advice of some of his friends, on making me a physician, because a physician may always make his fortune in Constantinople when he has learnt some little more than the common town-crier. Now, a great many Franks visited in our house; and one of them persuaded my father to let me travel into his country, to the city of Paris, where medical learning is to be acquired gratuitously and to the best advantage; at the same time promising to take me, free of expense, with him on his journey back. My father, who had travelled himself in his youth, consented; and the Frank told me I might be ready to start in three months. I was beyond me for joy at the thought of seeing foreign countries, and could scarcely wait the moment destined for our embarkation. At length the Frank had brought his business to a close, and made preparation for his journey; when, on the eve of my departure, my father led me into his bed-chamber. I there beheld fine clothes and arms lying upon the table. But what more than all attracted my notice was a large heap of gold; for I had never before seen so much together. My father embraced me, and said, "Look, my boy, I have provided clothes for thee on thy journey. Those arms, too, are thine: they are the same my grandfather girt on me when I set off for abroad. I know thou canst use them; but never do so till thou art assaulted, and then use them vigorously. My property is not large: and look, now I have portioned it out into three parts—one is

thine; the second is for my maintenance and casual wants; the third shall be a sacred, inviolable store, kept for thy service in the hour of need." So said my old father, while tears gathered in his eyes: tears, perhaps, of evil presage; for I never saw him more.

My journey was a quick one. We were soon in the land of the Franks; and in six days more we reached the great city of Paris. Here my Frankish friend took me a room, advising me to be careful how I laid out my money, the sum total of which was two thousand crowns. In that city I lived three years, and learnt all that a clever physician requires; though I should be telling a falsehood were I to say that I liked the place, for the manners of the people did not please me. Besides, I had but very few friends there, though these were noble young fellows.

At last, the longing for home grew powerful in me. All this time I had heard nothing of my father; and I therefore embraced a favourable opportunity of returning.

Just then, an embassy was despatched from the Frank country to the Sublime Porte. I engaged myself as physician in the ambassador's suite, and arrived safe again in Stamboul. I found my father's house shut up; and the neighbours stared when they saw me, and told me my father had died two months before. The priest who had taught me in my childhood brought me the key; and, alone and forsaken, I entered the desolate dwelling. I found everything as my father had left it: nothing was wanting but the gold which he had promised to leave me. I questioned the priest on the matter, and he bowed to me and said, "Your father died like a holy man, for he bequeathed his gold to the church." This was then and afterwards incomprehensible to me; but what could I do? I had no witnesses to refute him with, and I might be glad that he had not looked on the house and goods as a part of the legacy. This was the beginning of my misfortunes. But from that moment they came blow on blow.

My fame as physician was very far from spreading, because I was ashamed of playing the mountebank; and I was ever at a loss for my father's recommendation, which would have been an introduction for me to the richest and grandest people, who now troubled their heads no further about the poor Zaleucus. My father's stock, too, went off badly, for the customers had dribbled away since his death; and new ones are always har to obtain. So once, as I was disconsolately pondering on dm

situation, it occurred to me, having often seen countrymen of mine in the land of the Franks, who went about and disposed of their wares in the markets of the different cities. I remembered that people were glad to buy of them, because they came from abroad; and that, by such a trade, one's returns might be a hundredfold. In a moment my resolution was taken. I sold my paternal house, gave a part of the produce to the care of a trusty friend, and, with the remainder, bought such articles as are rare in the Frank country: shawls, silk stuffs, salves, and oils. I then took my passage in a vessel about to sail, and in this manner set out a second time for the country of my former sojourn. It seemed as if fortune had again turned in my favour the moment I left the castles of the Dardanelles behind me. Our passage was short and pleasant. I visited the Frank towns, large and small, everywhere finding a ready market for my commodities. My friend in Stamboul continually sent me fresh supplies; and day by day I grew more affluent. At length, having saved so much that I fancied a greater speculation might be safely ventured upon, I left with my merchandise for Italy: though, by the bye, I must confess there was another thing that was not a little lucrative to me: I availed myself of my skill in medicine. On arriving in a town, I had bills issued to the effect that a Greek physician might be consulted there who had already performed a number of cures; and, of a truth, my balsam and my drugs brought me in many a sequin. In this way I at last reached the town of Florence: I proposed staying some time at this place, partly because it was so much to my taste, and partly because I wished to recover the fatigues of my strolling life. I therefore took a ware-room in the quarter of St. Croce, and two beautiful apartments, with a balcony, in a neighbouring hotel. Without delay I sent my bills about, announcing myself as physician and merchant. Scarcely had I opened my store before purchasers streamed to it; and, in spite of my prices being somewhat high, I sold more than others, because I was obliging and civil to my customers. I had thus passed four pleasant days in Florence, when one evening, as I was giving my usual look at the supplies in my salve-boxes previously to closing my ware-room, I found a slip of paper in one of them which I did not remember to have put there. I opened it: it contained a mysterious invitation to repair that night punctually at twelve o'clock to the bridge called the Ponte Vecchio. I reflected for a long time who it could be that invited me thither; but, as I did not know a soul in Florence, I

thought they might perhaps want to lead me secretly to some sick person or other—a thing that had happened more than once before. I therefore resolved to be at the rendezvous; though, for prudence' sake, I girt on the sabre which my father had formerly presented me with.

When it was near midnight, I set out and soon reached the Ponte Vecchio. The bridge was silent and deserted; and I determined on waiting till the person who had summoned me should appear. The night was cold, the moon shone clear; and I gazed downward on the waters of the Arno, as they glimmered far away in her light. The city churches now struck twelve: I roused myself, and before me stood a tall man enwrapped in a red cloak, one end of which he held over his face.

I was at first somewhat dismayed, he appeared so suddenly behind me; but I instantly recovered myself and said, "If you have appointed to meet me here, speak, what are your commands?"

The red cloak turned away, saying in a marked tone, "Follow."

I felt somewhat uneasy in mind at the thought of going alone with this stranger; so I stood still, and said to him, "Then good sir, you won't tell me first where you are off for, nor give me a glimpse of your features, that I may see whether you mean well by me or no."

The red man appeared quite unconcerned; "If you won't come, Zaleucus, stay where you are!" replied he, and went his way.

Here my anger broke loose; "Do you think," cried I, "a man like me will let himself be made a fool of by every jackanapes, or that I am to wait for nothing on such a cold night as this."

Three springs, and I overtook him, seized him by the cloak, and shouted still more lustily; while I laid my other hand on my sabre: but the mantle was left in my hand, and the stranger vanished round the nearest corner. By degrees my passion cooled; at any rate I had the cloak, and this should serve as a key to the singular adventure. I put it on, and turned my steps homewards. I was scarcely a hundred yards from my door when some one brushed close by me, whispering, in the Frankish tongue, "Take care, Count, there is no doing anything to-night."

Before I could look round, the person had passed, and I saw nothing but a shadow sweep along the houses. That his words concerned the cloak, and not me, was plain enough; yet they

threw no light on the circumstances. The next morning I considered what was to be done. At first I was inclined to have the mantle cried, as if I had found it; but then the stranger might have it fetched by a third party, and I should obtain no clue to the mystery. Whilst engaged in these thoughts, I examined the habit more closely. It was of thick Genoese velvet, of a purple colour, edged with fur of Astrachan, and richly embroidered in gold. Its costliness suggested a plan, which I resolved upon executing. I carried it to my ware-room, and exposed it for sale, at the same time setting so high a price upon it that I was sure of not finding a purchaser. My purpose in this was to eye every one narrowly who inquired the price, for I felt certain I could distinguish the figure of the stranger among a thousand, having caught a clear though momentary view of him when he left the cloak in my hands. Many there were who were inclined to become its purchasers, for its extraordinary beauty drew the attention of every eye, but none bore the remotest likeness to the stranger; not one was willing to pay the high price of two hundred sequins. The strangest thing was, that when I asked this or that person whether there was no mantle like it in Florence, one and all answered with a "No," and assured me they had never seen such costly and elegant work.

It was fast drawing towards evening, when a young man who had often been at my ware-room, and who that day had offered largely for the cloak, at last came in, threw a purse full of sequins on the table, and cried "Well, Zaleucus, I must have your mantle, even if the bargain makes a beggar of me!" at the same moment he immediately began counting out his gold pieces. I was in a great dilemma; I had only hung out the thing in the hope of attracting the notice of the stranger, and here was a young fool willing to pay the monstrous price I had put upon it. But what could I do? I gave in, for on the other hand I was pleased with the thought of being so handsomely compensated for my night's adventure. The young man put on the cloak, and went away; he turned back, however, on the very threshold, in the act of loosening a paper that had been appended to the velvet; he threw it to me, saying—"Here, Zaleucus, here's something that I dare say doesn't form part of the purchase." I took up the slip of paper with unconcern; but could I believe my eyes when I read—"To-night, at the concerted hour, bring the cloak to the Ponte Vecchio; there four hundred sequins await thee." I stood like one thunder-struck. So then I had fooled away my own good fortune, and completely

missed my aim; however, I was not long in thinking what was to be done. I snatched up the two hundred sequins, ran after the purchaser, and said—"Take back your pieces, my good friend, and leave me the cloak: it is quite impossible for me to part with it." At first he thought I was joking, but when he noticed that I was in earnest, he flew into a passion at my demand, called me a fool, and so we came to blows. However, I was fortunate enough to win the cloak of him in the scuffle, and was just hurrying away with it, when he called in the police for help, and took me with him before the authorities. The judge was very much astonished at the charge, and awarded the garment to my opponent. I offered the young man twenty, fifty, eighty—yes, even a hundred sequins over and above his two hundred, if he would give up the cloak. My gold did what my entreaties could not do. He took my gold pieces, while I turned away in triumph, to be thought a madman by the whole of Florence. But what the people thought was all one to me. I knew much better than they did what I was to get by the bargain.

Impatiently I waited the fall of night. At the same hour as on the previous occasion, I went, with the cloak under my arm, to the Ponte Vecchio. With the last stroke of the bell the form emerged from the darkness, and stepped up to me. Without a shadow of doubt he was the same man.

"Hast thou the mantle?" said he.

"Yes, signior," replied I, "but it has cost me a clear hundred sequins."

"I know as much," rejoined he, "look here, here are four hundred."

He stepped with me to the broad balustrade of the bridge, and counted out the pieces. Four hundred there were, and brightly did they glitter in the moonshine. Their brilliancy gladdened my heart. Ah! I little dreamt that it was its last beat of joy. I put the money into my pocket, and turned to get a good look at the benevolent stranger; but he had a mask on, under which two dark eyes flashed fearfully.

"I thank you, signor, for your kindness," said I to him; "what do you require of me? But I must tell you beforehand that it must be nothing wrong."

"Quite an unnecessary fear," replied he, throwing the cloak round him, "I need your aid as a physician, yet not for the living, but for the dead."

"How can that be?" cried I with amazement!

"I came hither with my sister," he began, "from a distant country;" at the same time he beckoned me to follow him: "I resided here with her at the house of a friend of our family. My sister died yesterday, after a short illness, and her relations have fixed her burial for to-morrow. Now, by an ancient usage in our family, all the members of it should repose in the vault of their fathers: several who died abroad were embalmed, and now rest there. My sister's body I will leave to my relations; but I must, at least, take her head to my father, that he may see her once again." This custom of cutting off the heads of dear relations seemed rather horrible to me, yet I dared to make no objection to it from a fear of insulting the stranger. I, therefore, told him that I perfectly understood the embalming of the dead, and begged him to conduct me to the deceased. I could not, however, refrain asking "why all this must be done so clandestinely and at night?" He answered, that his relations, who thought his design cruel, would interfere in the day time; but, if the head were once dismembered, they would be able to say little more about it: to be sure he might have brought me the head, but a very natural feeling restrained him from dissevering it.

By this time we had reached a large and magnificent mansion; my conductor pointed it out to me as the object of our night walk. We passed the chief entrance, entered by a small door, which the stranger shut carefully after him, and then mounted, in the dark, a narrow winding staircase. This led us into a dimly lighted passage, by which we gained a chamber illumined by a lamp suspended from the ceiling.

In this room stood a bed, on which the body lay. The stranger turned away his eyes, and seemed trying to conceal his years. He pointed to the bed, ordered me to dispatch my business well and promptly, and then left the room.

I took out the knife which, as a surgeon, I always had with me, and approached the bed. Nothing but the head of the body was visible, but this was so beautiful that I was involuntarily seized with the deepest sense of pity. The dark hair floated down in long tresses, the countenance was pale, the eyes closed. I first made an incision in the skin, in the way surgeons do when they take off a limb; and then, grasping my sharpest knife, with one gash I cut through the throat. But, horror of horrors! The dead opened her eys, but closed them immediately, and, only now, with a deep-drawn sigh, she seemed to breathe her last. At this moment a stream of warm blood spirted on me from

the wound. I felt convinced that I had been guilty of the poor creature's death! for that she was dead, there was not a doubt—such a wound was beyond all cure. I stood for some minutes in heart-broken dismay at what was done. Had the man in the red mantle deceived me? Or, was his sister in a trance only? The latter supposition appeared to me the more probable one. But I did not dare tell the brother of the deceased that a somewhat less hasty incision would have awoke without destroying her; so I was about to complete the dismemberment, when the dying girl groaned once more, stretched herself in convulsive pain, and died. Then terror overcame me, and I rushed suddenly out of the room. In the corridor outside all was dark; for the lamp had gone out, not a trace of my conductor was to be seen, and I had to grope my way by guess-work along the wall to come at the winding staircase. I discovered it at last, and half falling, half sliding, I descended it. Below, too, there was no one. The door was ajar, and I breathed more freely when I had gained the open street; for, in the house, I had felt strangely uncomfortable. Goaded by terror, I ran to my lodgings, and buried myself in the cushions of my couch, that I might forget the fearful deed which I had committed. But sleep fled my temples, and it was morning only that warned me of the necessity of composing myself. I thought it probable, that the man who had led me to do this impious deed, as it now appeared to me, would not betray me to justice. I instantly, therefore, resolved to go to my business, in the ware-room, and to assume, as far as possible, an air of unconcern. But, alas! another circumstance, which I had not before noticed, increased my trouble. I missed my cap, my sash, and my knife too; and I was uncertain whether I had left them in the chamber of the slain, or lost them in my flight. The first surmise, alas! seemed the more probable one, and so I might be discovered to be a murderer. I opened my shop at the usual hour. My neighbour came to me, as he used every morning to do; for he was a chatty man. "Bless me! what do you say to the dreadful thing," he began, "that occurred last night?" I pretended to know nothing about it. "What! you don't know what the whole town is full of? Not know that the fairest flower of Florence, Bianca, the Governor's daughter, was murdered last night! Ah! I saw her yesterday driving so happily through the streets with her bridegroom; for to-day they were to have been wedded." My neighbour's every word went like a dagger through my heart; and often

did my torments return, for every customer that came told me the story, each more frightfully than the last; and yet not one of them could relate anything so horrible as what I had seen. About noon an officer of justice entered my shop, and begged me to dismiss my customers. "Signor Zaleucus," said he, "producing the articles I had missed, "are these things yours?" I considered a moment whether I should not wholly deny them; but, seeing through the half-open door my landlord and other acquaintances, who were, likely, witnesses against me, I resolved not to make matters worse by a lie, and confessed to the articles produced. The officer begged of me to follow him, and conducted me to a large building, which I soon recognised to be the prison. There, without further ado, he assigned me a cell.

My situation seemed a terrible one when I pondered on it in my loneliness. The thought of having murdered, though undesignedly, was continually returning; nor could I conceal from myself that the glitter of the gold had held my senses captive, or I should not have fallen so blindly into the trap. Covetousness, was my sin; and severely was I to be punished for it. Two hours after my arrest I was led out of my cell. I descended several flights of steps, and at last reached a large hall. At a long table hung in black, twelve, chiefly old, men were sitting. On the sides of the hall were ranged benches, filled with the first people of Florence; in the galleries, which were erected higher, stood a close throng of spectators. On my taking my place before the black table, a man of a sombre and sorrowful countenance rose from his seat. It was the Governor. He announced to the assembly that, as father, he could not do judgment in this case, and would therefore vacate his office in favour of the eldest senator. The eldest senator was an old man of at least ninety years. His form was bowed, and his temples graced with thin white hair; but his eyes were fiery still, and his voice strong and firm. He began by asking me if I confessed the murder? I begged him to hear me; and I recounted undauntedly, in an audible voice, all that I had done and all that I knew. I observed that the Governor, during my recital, turned rapidly pale and red; and when I had done, he broke out in a fury: "What, wretch!" cried he, "so wilt thou charge on another the crime which thy covetousness committed?" The senator rebuked him for his interruption, as he had voluntarily ceded his authority; adding that it was not at all made out that I had sinned from covetousness, for, by his own account, none of the deceased's property had

been stolen. Yes; he even went further. He informed the Governor that he would have to account for the previous life of his daughter; for this was the only means of deciding whether I had told the truth. With this, he adjourned the court for that day; wishing to gain further insight into the case from the papers of the unfortunate girl, to be delivered to him by the Governor. I was led back to prison, where I passed a dismal day, ever occupied with the ardent longing that some connexion or other might be discovered between the deceased and the man of the red cloak.

The next day I entered the court full of hope. A mass of letters was lying on the table. The old senator asked me if they were my handwriting. I looked at them, and saw that they must be by the same pen as the two notes which I had received. I expressed as much to the senators: but they seemed to pay no regard to me, saying that I might and must have written both; for the signature was beyond mistake a Z., the initial letter of my name. The letters contained threats to the deceased, warning her against the union which was about to take place.

The governor seemed to have given strange orders as regarded my person. From that day I was treated with greater mistrust and severity than before. In vindication of myself, I appealed to my papers, which would be found in my room; but they told me a search had been made, and nothing found. Thus, at the rising of the court, every hope vanished; and, on my being led into the hall on the third day, they read me my sentence, to the effect that I had been convicted of deliberate murder, and was condemned to die. To this dreadful pass had things now come, that, deserted by all that was dear to me on earth, and far from my home, I had to die in the flower of my years by the axe of the executioner.

On the evening of this terrible day that had decided my fate I was sitting in my lonely dungeon, uncheered by hope, and with thoughts earnestly bent on death, when the door of my cell opened, and a man entered, who looked at me for a long time in silence. "So I see you once more, Zaleucus," said he. By the dim light of the lamp I had not recognised him; but the sound of his voice awoke old remembrances in me. It was Valetti, one of those few friends whom I had known while studying in the city of Paris. He told me he had come by chance to Florence, where his father lived in good circumstances. He had heard of my story; and was come to see me once again,

and to learn how I could have been guilty of so great a crime. I told him everything as it had happened. He seemed very much astonished; and conjured me to hide nothing from him, my only friend, that I might not pass away with a lie on my tongue. I swore by all that was dearest to me that I had spoken the truth, and I was only guilty in being dazzled by the glitter of the gold, and in not recognising at once the improbability of the stranger's tale. "Then you didn't know Bianca," said he. I protested I had never seen her. Valetti now told me that the affair was involved in great mystery; that the governor had been very hasty in furthering my condemnation; and the report spread about was that I had known Bianca long before, and had murdered her to revenge myself for her intended marriage with another. I remarked that all this tallied exactly with my idea of the man of the mantle; but that I had nothing to prove his participation in the deed. Valetti embraced me in tears, promising to do everything to save my life, at least. I had but very little hope; yet I knew that he was a clever man and a thorough lawyer, and would leave nothing undone to save me. For two long days I was in uncertainty: at last my friend appeared. "I bring you some consolation," said he, "though of a painful kind. You will retain your life and liberty, but with the loss of a hand." In deep emotion, I thanked him for my life. He told me that the governor was not to be prevailed upon to submit the affair to a second examination; but, in order not to appear unjust, he had at last consented that, in the event of our finding a similar case in the archives of Florentine history, my punishment should be regulated by the one there awarded. His father and he had been rummaging in the old chronicles day and night, and had at length found a case exactly similar to my own. The sentence was to this effect: "His left hand shall be cut off, his property confiscated, and he himself be banished for ever." Such was my punishment now to be; and I was to prepare myself for the painful hour that awaited me. I will forbear to picture to you those horrible moments, when I laid my hand on the block in the open market-place, and my own blood gushed profusely over me.

Valetti received me into his house till I had recovered, and then generously furnished me with money for my journey, for all my hard earnings had become the spoil of justice. I sailed from Florence to Sicily, and thence with the first ship to Constantinople. My hopes all lay in the sum of money entrusted to my

friend, and I begged of him moreover for leave to lodge with him; but how astonished was I when he asked me why I did not take possession of my house. He told me that a stranger had, in my name, bought a house in the Greek quarter, informing the neighbours that I should soon appear myself. I immediately repaired thither with my friend, and was joyfully received by all my old acquaintances. An old merchant gave me a letter, which the man who had bought the house had left with him for me.

In it I read as follows:—"Zaleucus, two hands are ever ready to work without remission, that you may not feel the loss of the one. The house you see, and all it contains, are yours, and as much will annually be remitted to you as will place you among the richest of your people. May you forgive him who is more wretched than you!'

I could guess who had written it, and the merchant replied to my further questions by saying that it was a man whom he should have taken for a Frank, and who wore a red mantle. I now knew sufficient to confess in secret that the guilty stranger was not altogether destitute of noble feeling. In my new house I found the appointments all of the very best, and in addition to these a finer store of wares than I had ever possessed. Ten years have passed since then; more from habit than necessity I continue my mercantile travels, though I have never since visited the land of my misfortunes. I have every year received a thousand pieces of gold: yet, though I am happy in the thought of the unfortunate man's munificence, he cannot for all that redeem my sorrow of soul, for ceaselessly there lives in me the horrid picture of the murdered Bianca.

Zaleucus, the Greek merchant, had ended his story. The others had listened to him with great interest, and the stranger seemed particularly affected; he had more than once uttered deep sighs, and Muley even thought he had once seen tears in his eyes. For a long time the story was the subject of conversation.

"And don't you hate the unknown one, who deprived you so basely of so noble a member, and even put your life in peril?" said the stranger.

"There were hours formerly," answered the Greek, "in which my heart accused him before God for bringing this sorrow upon me, and embittering my life; but I found comfort in

the faith of my fathers, which enjoins me to love my enemies; and perhaps after all he is unhappier than I."

"You are a noble soul," cried the stranger, and he pressed the hand of the Greek with emotion.

At this moment the leader of the guard interrupted them. He entered the tent with a look of concern, and gave notice that they would do well not to consign themselves to repose, for this was the spot where the caravans were usually attacked, and his lookers-out too thought they could see a body of horsemen in the distance.

The merchants were sore taken aback at this intelligence; but Selim, the stranger, expressed his surprise at their alarm, and said, since they were well protected, they surely need not fear a troop of wandering Arabs.

"Yes, good sir," replied the leader of the escort, "if it were only such rabble as that, we might lie down in peace; but latterly the terrible Orbusan has been showing his face again, and that is a signal for us to be upon our guard."

The stranger asked who this Orbusan might be; and Achmet, the old merchant, answered—"There are all kinds of reports rife among the people about this wonderful man; some take him for a supernatural being, as he often stands a fight with five or six men at once; others believe him to be a brave Frank, whom misfortune has driven to these parts; but of all this only one thing is certain, namely, that he is a noted thief and robber."

"That you've no right to declare though," rejoined Lezah, one of the merchants. "If he be a robber, he's a noble fellow for all that, and such he proved himself to be to my brother, as I could relate to you. He has brought his whole tribe into regular discipline; and as long as he is roaming the desert, no other dare let itself be seen. Besides, he doesn't rob like others; he only levies ward-money on the caravans, and he who pays this with good grace pursues his way unperilled, for Orbusan is the lord of the desert."

In this manner the travellers chatted in their tent; the sentinels, however, who had been stationed round the place of encampment began to be uneasy; a pretty large body of armed horsemen appeared at about the distance of a mile, and seemed making direct for the camp. One of the escort, therefore, entered the tent, and announced the probability of an attack. The merchants took counsel as to what was to be done; whether they should move against them, or wait their onset. Achmet and the two elder merchants were for the latter, but the fiery Muley and

Zaleucus urged the former plan, and called on the stranger to aid them; he, however, quietly drew from his girdle a small blue cloth worked with red stars, fastened it on a lance, and ordered one of the slaves to fix it on the tent. "He'd wager his life," he said, "that when the horsemen saw that sign they would pass on in peace."

Muley put no faith in the result; however, the slave fixed the lance over the tent. In the mean time the people in the camp had taken up arms, and were now watching the horsemen in anxious expectation; but the latter seemed to have espied the signal on the tent, for they suddenly diverged from their march on the camp, and took a wide circuit clear of their flank.

The travellers stood awhile in astonishment, looking now at the horsemen, now at the stranger; the latter remained at the door of the tent, looking with perfect indifference over the plain, as if nothing had happened. Muley at length broke silence.

"Who art thou, mighty stranger," cried he, "who tamest with a wink the wild hordes of the desert?"

"You make more of my skill than it is worth," answered Selim Baruch. "I provided myself with this token on my escape from captivity. What it means I know not myself; only this I know, that he who travels with this badge is under powerful protection."

The merchants thanked the stranger, and called him their preserver; and, in truth, the number of the horsemen was so great, that the caravans would not long have been in a condition to resist.

With lighter hearts they now retired to rest, and when the sun declined and the evening wind swept over the sandy plain, they struck their tents and moved forward.

The next encampment was only about a day's journey from the end of the desert, and when the travellers had again assembled in the chief tent, the merchant Lezah began as follows:—"Yesterday I told you that the terrible Orbusan was a noble soul: allow me, to-day, to prove this to you by recounting the fortunes of my brother.

"My father was cadi in Acarci. He had three children; I was the eldest; my brother and sister were much younger than I. When I had reached the age of twenty, a brother of my father's summoned me to him; he made me heir to all his property, on condition of my remaining with him till his death. But he reached an advanced age, so that I returned home only two years ago, quite ignorant of the fearful destiny that had befallen my house, and the goodness of Allah in averting it."

FATIMA'S RESCUE.

My brother Mustapha and my sister Fatima were pretty nearly of the same age; the former had at most the advantage by two years. They loved each other tenderly, and jointly contributed to do all that could relieve my infirm father of the burden of age. Now, on Fatima's sixteenth birthday, my brother gave an entertainment. He invited all her playmates, served them with exquisite viands in his father's garden, and towards evening invited them to a short trip on the sea, in a bark which he had hired and festively decorated. Fatima and her play-fellows consented with joy, for it was a beautiful evening, and the city—especially at that hour of day—presented a splendid view from the water. The girls were so pleased with their sail, that they prevailed on my brother to keep out farther and farther to sea; Mustapha yielded, but with reluctance, because a corsair had made his appearance a few days before. Not far from the town, a headland juts out into the waves; the girls wanted to gain it, in order from that point to view the sinking of the sun in the waters. While they were doubling the cape, they saw a bark at no great distance, filled with armed men: auguring nothing very pleasant, my brother ordered the rowers to put the boat about and row to land. This anxiety seemed too well grounded; for the strange bark gave chace to my brother's, overtook her—having the advantage in rowers—and then held on her course between our boat and the shore. The girls, on seeing the danger that threatened them, jumped up, shrieking and wailing. In vain did Mustapha try to quiet them; in vain did he charge them to sit still, because their running about put the boat in danger of capsizing; it was all in vain. And at last, when, on the nearer approach of the other vessel, they all rushed to the further side of theirs, the latter turned over. In the mean time,

the motions of the strange boat had been observed from the shore, and, as for some time the people of the coast had stood in fear of corsairs, this stranger had excited their suspicion, and several boats put out to the assistance of ours. They only came in time, however, to pick up the sinking crew; and in the confusion that ensued, the hostile craft had escaped, leaving the other two crews uncertain whether they had picked up all or not. At length they neared each other, when, alas! my sister and one of her playmates were found missing; while in one of the boats was a stranger, whom nobody knew anything of. On Mustapha's threatening him, he confessed that he belonged to the hostile bark, lying at anchor two miles to the east, and that his shipmates in their hasty flight had left him in the lurch, while he was helping to pick up the girls; he said, also, that he had seen two of them carried off to the ship.

My old father's grief was unbounded; and Mustapha, too, was inconsolable. Not only had he lost his dear sister, and not only did he reproach himself for being the cause of the disaster; but the friend of Fatima, who shared her misfortune, had been accorded him as bride by her parents; and he had merely not had courage enough to tell his father, because her parents were poor and of mean extraction. But my father was a severe man. When his grief had in some measure abated, he summoned Mustapha to him, and addressed him thus—

"Thy folly hath robbed me of the comfort of my age and the joy of my eyes. Go! I banish thee for ever from my presence. I curse thee and thy offspring; and then only, when thou bringest me Fatima again, shall thy head be free from thy father's curse."

This my brother had not expected. Long before, he had resolved to go in quest of his sister and her friend; and only wished to crave the blessing of his father, when he was sent into the wide world with his curse. But if grief had before subdued him, the weight of this undeserved sorrow now steeled his courage.

He went to the captive pirate, and asked him whither his ship was bound; and learnt from him that it was engaged in the slave trade, and usually put in for the grand market at Balsora.

On his returning home to prepare for his journey, his father's anger seemed to have somewhat subsided, for he sent him a purse of gold to support him on his way. Mustapha took leave in tears of the parents of Zoraida, his stolen bride, and set off for Balsora.

He chose travelling by land, because no vessel went from our

little port direct to Balsora. He was, therefore, obliged to make forced journeys, that he might not reach Balsora too late; and, having a good horse and no baggage, he had good hopes of arriving at that town on the sixth day. But, alas! on the evening of the fourth day, as he was riding on his way alone, three men suddenly fell upon him; and, as he noticed that they were strong and well armed, and thought more of his money and horse than of his life, he cried out to them that he would yield. They dismounted, bound his feet together under his horse's belly, and placing him between them, whilst one led his steed by the bridle, they went off with him at a quick trot, without speaking a single word.

Mustapha now gave himself up to sullen despair. His father's curse seemed to the wretched man on the point of fulfilment; and what hope had he of saving his sister and Zoraida, now that he had been robbed of all other resources, and had nothing but his sorry life to apply to their delivery? He might have ridden on in this way with his mute escort for about an hour, when they turned off into a little valley on their flank. It lay environed by high trees, while a soft dark-green turf, and a brook that purled on through the middle of it, invited to repose. He beheld, moreover, from fifteen to twenty tents pitched there, to the pegs of which camels and beautiful horses were tethered; while from one of these sounded the merry tinkling of a guitar, accompanied by two fine male voices. My brother thought that men who had selected so pleasant a spot for encampment could have no ill design against him, and therefore he fearlessly obeyed the orders of his guides, who loosened his bonds and signed to him to dismount. They led him into a tent larger than the rest, and whose interior was prettily—almost elegantly—decorated. Costly cushions, embroidered in gold, worked carpets, gilt braziers for smoking, would, in any other place, have announced wealth and comfort; here they appeared but the fruits of daring plunder. On one of the cushions sat a little old man; in face he was ugly, his complexion of a swarthy polish, and a repulsive cast of malicious cunning in his eyes and mouth made him odious to look at. Although this person tried to give himself a certain air, Mustapha was not slow in remarking that the tent was not so richly decked out for *him;* and the language of his guides served to confirm his surmises.

"Where is the Strong One?" inquired they of the little man.

"He is on a foray," replied he; "but he has commissioned me to supply his place."

"That was not clever of him," rejoined one of the robbers; "for it must soon be decided whether this dog is to die or no, and that the Strong One knows better than you."

The little man rose in the full sense of his dignity, stretching forward to his utmost length to reach the ear of his opponent with the tip of his finger, for he seemed very much inclined to revenge himself with a blow; but seeing that his endeavours were in vain, he began to utter abuse, till the tent rang again; for truly the others paid liberally to his account. Then all of a sudden the door opened, and in stepped a tall, stately man, young and beautiful as a Persian prince: his apparel and arms were simple, and of small account, saving a richly-set poniard and a shining sabre; but his decided glance and the dignity of his bearing commanded respect, without inspiring fear. "Who is it that dares to stir up a brawl in my tent?" cried he.

For awhile there was a deep silence; at last, one of those who had brought in Mustapha related how it had arisen. The countenance of the "Strong One," as they termed him, seemed to glow with anger. "When did I ever put thee in my place, Hassan?" cried he to the little man, in a terrible voice.

The latter shrunk up for very fear, till he looked much smaller than before, and sneaked out of the door. A well-directed kick from the Strong One made him fly out in a most ludicrous summerset. When the little man had vanished, the three men led Mustapha to the lord of the tent, who in the meanwhile had lain down on the cushions. "Here we bring thee him whom thou commanded'st us to seize," said they.

He eyed the prisoner a long time, and then addressed him thus: "Basha of Zulieika! thy own conscience will tell thee why thou standest before Orbusan."

"O, my lord," replied Mustapha, "thou seemest to be in error. I am a poor unfortunate, but not the Basha, whom thou seekest." All in the tent were astonished at this speech.

"It can be of little avail to thee to use disguise; for I can confront thee with people who know thee well enough."

He ordered Zuleima to be brought in. An old woman was led into the tent, who, on being asked whether she did not recognise in my brother the Basha of Zulieika, answered, "Yes, indeed; and I swear, by the grave of the Prophet, that this is the Basha, and no one else."

"Dost thou see, wretch, how thy cunning is turned to

nought?" began the Strong One, angrily. "Thou art too miserable a creature for me to soil my good dagger with thy blood; but to-morrow, at sunrise, I will bind thee to the tail of my horse, and gallop with thee through the woods, till his fire sinks again behind the hills of Zulieika!"

Then my poor brother's spirit failed him. "This is the curse of my harsh father!" cried he, in tears, "that consigns me to an ignominious death! And thou, too, art lost, sweet sister; and thou, too, Zoraida!"

"Thy dissimulation is of no avail," said one of the robbers; while he bound his hands behind his back. "Out of the tent with you! for the Strong One biteth his lip, and glanceth at his dagger. If thou wilt live a night longer, come along with you."

Just as the robbers were leading my brother out of the tent, they met three others, driving a prisoner before them. They entered with him. "Here, we bring thee the Basha, as thou commandedst us," said they, leading the prisoner up to the couch of the Strong One.

During this proceeding my brother had leisure to look at him, and he was astonished himself at the likeness which this man bore to him, though he saw that he was of a darker complexion, and wore a black beard. The Strong One seemed very much amazed by the appearance of the second prisoner. "Which of you, then, is the right one?" said he, first eyeing my brother, and then his fellow-captive.

"If thou meanest the Basha of Zulieika," answered the second prisoner, in a haughty tone, "I am he."

The Strong One gazed at him awhile, solemnly and terribly; he then mutely signed to have the Basha removed. When this was done he approached my brother, cut his bonds with his dagger, and beckoned him to take his seat by him on his cushion. "I am sorry, stranger," said he, "that I mistook you for that monster; ascribe it, however, to a singular dispensation of heaven only, that cast you into the hands of my brothers at the very moment which was destined to seal the fate of that villain."

My brother simply requested leave to continue his journey, since every second's delay might be fatal to his plan. The Strong One inquired his urgent mission, and on Mustapha's telling him all, the latter persuaded him to stay the night in his tent, since he and his horse must stand in need of rest, promising next day to show him a route which would take him in a

day and a-half to Balsora. My brother agreed, was splendidly entertained, and slept soundly till morning in the tent of the robber.

On waking, he found himself alone in the tent, but he heard several voices of persons in conversation outside the door, among which he could distinguish those of the lord of the pavilion and the little swarthy man. He listened awhile, and to his horror heard the little man earnestly urge the other to put an end to the stranger, because on being released he might betray them all.

Mustapha immediately noticed that the little fellow owed him a grudge, because he had been the cause of his yesterday's ill-treatment. The Strong One seemed to consider matters awhile. "No," said he; "he is my guest; and the rights of hospitality are sacred with me; besides, he does not look like one who would betray us." Thus saying, he put back the hangings of the doorway, and entered. "Peace be with thee, Mustapha," said he: "let us taste the morning cup, and then make ready for departure." He handed my brother a cup of sherbet, and after drinking they saddled their horses; and, sooth, with a far lighter heart than he had come with, Mustapha vaulted on his steed.

They had soon left the tents behind them, and they then struck into a broad path, leading into the forest. The Strong One informed my brother that that Basha whom his scouts had taken had promised them the free run of his territory; but some weeks before that, he had captured one of their bravest men, put him to the most fearful tortures, and then hung him; He had long set liers in wait for him, and that day he was to suffer. Mustapha ventured not a word of expostulation, for he was glad enough to escape with a whole skin himself.

At the end of the wood the Strong One reined up his horse, described the path my brother should take, offered him his hand at parting, and then said, "Mustapha, thou hast been in a singular way the guest of the robber Orbusan. I will not call upon thee not to betray what thou hast seen and heard. Thou hast unjustly endured the torturing fear of death, and I owe thee compensation. Take this poniard as a memento of me, and when thou needest aught of help, send it to me, and I will hasten to thy succour. This purse, perhaps, may be of use to thee on thy journey."

My brother thanked him for his magnanimity; he took the dagger, but refused the purse: but Orbusan again pressed his

hand, let the purse fall, and dashed off with the speed of the storm into the wood. As Mustapha saw he had no chance of overtaking him, he alighted to raise the purse; but how awe-struck was he at the extent of his entertainer's generosity! The purse contained a great quantity of gold. He thanked Allah for his preservation, commended the generous robber to his mercy, and proceeded in more cheerful mood on the way to Balsora.

Chapter II.

Lezah ceased speaking, and cast an inquiring look at Achmet, the old merchant.

"Nay, if things be so," said the latter, "I am happy to alter my opinion of Orbusan; for of a truth he dealt handsomely by your brother."

"He acted like a brave Mussulman," cried Muley; "but I hope you have not done your story yet. For I fancy we are all curious to hear how your brother got on; and whether or no he released Fatima, your sister, and the beautiful Zoraida."

"If I don't tire you with it, I shall be happy to continue," replied Lezah; "for my brother's is really an eventful and wonderful story."

At noon, on the seventh day after his departure from home, Mustapha passed the gates of Balsora. As soon as he had alighted at a caravansary, where the annual slave-market was to commence, to his dismay he received a reply that he had just come two days too late. The people regretted his delay, and informed him that he was a great loser by it, for on the very last day of the market two slaves had arrived, of such surpassing beauty that the eye of every purchaser was attracted to them. There had been a pretty scuffle and scramble for them, and they had, finally, been sold at a very high price; such a one, indeed, as only their present master would not blink at. He made further inquiries about them, and not a shadow of doubt remained that they were the two unfortunates whom he was in search of. He also learnt that the man who had bought them lived forty hours' journey distant from Balsora. His name was

Thiuli Cos, a grand and wealthy but somewhat elderly man, formerly Capaddan Basha of the Grand Sultan, who had now withdrawn into retirement with his accumulated riches.

At first, Mustapha thought of immediately taking horse, and hastening after Thiuli Cos, who could scarcely be a day's journey in advance. But when he reflected that he alone, without train or equipage, could have no concern with so powerful a traveller, and could still less relieve him of his plunder, he pondered on some other scheme, and soon devised one. His having been so dangerously mistaken for the Basha of Zulieika suggested the thought of his entering the house of Thiuli Cos under this name, and thus venturing an attempt at the rescue of the two unfortunate girls. To this end he hired servants and horses (and here Orbusan's money stood him in good stead), procured costly attire for himself and retinue, and set out in this sort for Thiuli's castle. In five days he reached the neighbourhood of the mansion. It was situated in a beautiful plain, and was surrounded by high walls, which were but triflingly overtopped by the main edifice.

On his arrival, Mustapha dyed his hair and beard black, smearing his face with the juice of a plant which gave it a blackish hue, exactly like that of the Basha. He dispatched one of his servants to the castle, who was to crave accommodation for the night in the name of the Basha of Zulieika. The servant soon returned, and with him four slaves in rich apparel, who held Mustapha's horse by the bridle, and led the way to the court of the castle. There they assisted him to alight, and four others escorted him up a broad marble stair to Thiuli.

Thiuli, who was a merry old fellow, received my brother with reverence, and had the very best placed before him that his cook could prepare. After their repast, Mustapha gradually led the conversation to the new slaves. Thiuli praised their beauty, lamenting only that they were always so pensive; though he thought this would soon pass off. My brother was highly delighted with his reception, and full of the fairest hopes, he retired to rest.

He had slept about an hour, when he was awoke by the dazzling glimmer of a lamp. As he drew up to a sitting posture, he thought he must still be dreaming, for straight before him stood that little swarthy fellow out of Orbusan's tent, with a lamp in his hand, and his broad mouth distorted to a hideous grin. Mustapha pinched himself in the arm, and twinged his

nose, to convince himself that he was really awake; but the apparition remained as before.

"What wantest thou at my bed-side?" cried Mustapha, recovering from his astonishment.

"Don't be at such a deal of trouble, now, Musta," answered the little fellow; "I think I guess well enough what you are come here about. I could remember your worthy face pretty well; though really, if I had not helped to hang the Basha with my own hand, you might perhaps have taken me in. But as it is, I am here to put a question to you."

"First say what brought you here," rejoined Mustapha, furious at being betrayed.

"I'll tell you," replied the other; "I couldn't keep up a good understanding with the Strong One, so I took to my heels. But you, Mustapha, were—properly speaking—the cause of our variance; and so you must give me your sister to wife, and I will aid your flight. If you won't, why then I'll be off to my new master, and tell him a trifle about the new Basha."

Mustapha was beyond himself with terror and fury. Just now, as he was at the sure goal of his wishes, this miserable wretch must come and disappoint them. With a single spring he leapt from his bed on his tormentor; but the latter, probably suspecting punishment, let the lamp drop. It went out, and he escaped in the dark, shouting lustily for help.

Now what was to be done? for the present Mustapha must give up his scheme, and only think of his own safety. So he rushed to the window, to see whether he could not leap out. It was pretty high from the ground, and on the other side there was a high wall to get over. He stood a moment in thought at the window, when he heard voices approaching his chamber; they were already at the door. In despair he gathered up his dagger and his clothes, and threw himself from the window. His fall was a hard one, but he felt that no limb was broken; he jumped up, therefore, ran to the wall that surrounded the court, surmounted it to the amazement of his pursuers, and was soon in the open country. He fled till he reached a small wood, and there threw himself down in a state of exhaustion. There he considered what was to be done. He had been obliged to leave his servants and horses in the lurch; but his money he had saved, as he carried it in his sash. In spite of all, however, his inventive brain soon pointed out a way of releasing the captives. He went further into the wood, till he reached a

village, where, for a trifle, he bought a horse, which soon bore him to a town.

He there inquired for a physician, and they recommended him an experienced old man. Mustapha prevailed upon him, by the present of a few pieces, to give him a medicine which would produce a sleep like death, and the effects of which might be suspended in a moment. When he had obtained this nostrum, he bought a long false beard, a black gown, and all sorts of boxes and vials, so that he might with good grace pass for a travelling physician, loaded his ass with the things, and journeyed back to Thiuli Cos's castle. He might be sure of not being recognised this time, for the beard so changed him that he scarcely knew himself. On arriving at Thiuli's he announced himself as the doctor Chakaman Kabudibaba; and it turned out as he expected. The sounding name recommended him uncommonly to the old fool, and procured him an instant invitation to his table.

Chakaman Kabudibaba presented himself before Thiuli; and they had scarcely conversed an hour, when the old fellow resolved on intrusting all his slaves to the treatment of the clever physician. The latter could scarcely conceal his joy at the thought of again seeing his dear sister, and with a beating heart he followed Thiuli into the seraglio. They entered an apartment that was prettily decorated, but with no one in it.

"Chambaba, or whatever is your name, dear doctor," said Thiuli, "just keep your eye on that hole in the wall; each of my slaves will stretch her arm out at it, and then you may feel whether their pulses are healthy, or the reverse."

Mustapha's objections to this plan were all in vain; get a glimpse of them he could not. However, Thiuli agreed to tell him how they usually were in point of health, or what ailments they severally had.

Thiuli then drew a long list from his sash, and began to call his slaves singly by name; and at every call a hand issued from the wall, and the doctor examined the pulse. Six of them had already been called over, and one and all declared healthy, when he summoned Fatima, the seventh, and a white little hand slipped out through the wall. Trembling with joy, Mustapha seized it, and with a grave air declared the slave to be seriously ill. Thiuli was much concerned, and directed the wise Chakaman Kabudibaba to be quick and prepare her a medicine. The physician went out, and on a slip of paper wrote as follows:—"Fatima, I will save thee, if thou canst re-

solve to take a draught which will make thee seem dead for two days; I possess the means of restoring thee to life. If thou wilt, only say this medicine has been of no avail, and that will be a sign of your acquiescence."

He soon returned to the room where Thiuli was waiting for him. He brought with him an innocuous potion, again felt the pulse of the sick Fatima, and at the same moment slipped the paper under her bracelet, handing her the draught through the hole in the wall. Thiuli seemed very distressed about his slave, and put off the examination of the rest to a more convenient hour. On quitting the apartment with Mustapha, he said in a sorrowful tone, "Chudibaba, tell me frankly, what do you think of Fatima's symptoms?"

"Ah! master, may the Prophet give thee comfort; she has a slow fever, that may well be the death of her."

Here Thiuli's wrath broke its bounds.

"What sayest thou, cursed dog of a doctor? she for whom I gave two thousand gold pieces shall die like a cow? Mark me, if thou save her not, I'll have thy head."

By this my brother saw he had done a stupid trick, and gave Thiuli some little hope again. While they were wrangling thus, a black slave came from the seraglio to tell the physician that the draught had not taken effect.

"Summon thy whole skill to thine aid, Chakamda Babelba, or whatever thy name is; I'll pay thee what thou wilt," said Thiuli, screaming—yea, almost howling with anguish, at the thought of losing such a sum of gold.

"I will give her an elixir that will put her out of all pain," replied the doctor.

"Yes, yes; give her the elixir," sobbed old Thiuli.

In happy mood Mustapha went to fetch the sleeping potion, and when he had given it to the slave, and showed him how much was to be taken at once, he returned to Thiuli and said he must go too, and fetch some healing herbs from the lake; and then he made haste out of the gate. On the banks of the lake, which was not far from the castle, he took off his disguise and threw it into the water, where it swam about quite cheerily; while he hid himself in the brushwood, waited the fall of night, and then stole away to the cemetery of Thiuli's castle.

Now Mustapha had been scarcely an hour absent from the mansion, when Thiuli received news that his slave, Fatima, was on the point of death. He sent in all haste to the lake to fetch

the physician; but his messengers soon returned alone, reporting that the poor doctor had fallen into the water and been drowned; that his black gown might be seen swimming about, and now and then his imposing beard bobbed up out of the waves. When Thiuli saw that no hope was left, he cursed himself and the whole world, tore his beard, and dashed his head against the wall. But all this was of no use, for Fatima soon expired in the arms of the other women. On the news of her death being brought him, Thiuli ordered a coffin to be prepared with all speed, for he could not bear a corpse in the house, and had the body carried out to the cemetery. The bearers conveyed it thither, but put it hastily down, and fled; for they had heard sighs and groans among the other coffins.

Mustapha, who had hid himself behind some of them, and from his lurking place had frightened the bearers away, now came forth, and lit a lamp, which he had brought with him for the purpose. He then took out a phial containing the antidote, and raised the lid of Fatima's coffin. But what horror seized him when, by the glimmer of the lamp, other features than those he had expected met his eye; neither my sister nor Zoraida, but quite a different person lay in the bier. He was some time in recovering this new award of fate; at length, however, pity got the better of his anger. He uncorked the phial and administered the medicine. She breathed, she opened her eyes, and seemed long in endeavouring to recollect where she was. At last she remembered all that had happened, rose from the coffin, and threw herself at Mustapha's feet.

"How can I thank thee enough, kind being," said she, "for delivering me from my fearful captivity?" Mustapha interrupted her expressions of gratitude with the question; how it had happened that she, and not his sister Fatima, had been rescued. The liberated girl gazed at him in astonishment. "Now I understand," said she, "the manner of my release; but before it was unintelligible to me. Learn, then, that I was called Fatima in that castle, and to me thou gavest the paper and the sleeping draught."

My brother requested the rescued one to give him intelligence of his sister and Zoraida, and he learnt that both were in the house; but according to Thiuli's wont had received new names, and that they then were called Mizrah and Nourmahal.

When Fatima saw that my brother was so depressed in spirit

by this mistake, she tried to cheer him, and promised, for all that, to tell him a way of saving the two girls.

Animated with this idea, Mustapha took heart anew; he begged of her to name her plan, and she spoke as follows:—"It is true that I was Thiuli's captive only five months, yet, from the very first, I pondered on the means of escape, though for me alone they proved too difficult. In the inner court of the castle you will have noticed a fountain, that throws its waters from ten different jets: this fountain soon caught my attention. I remembered having seen a similar one in my father's house, whose waters were conveyed through a spacious conduit. Now, in order to find out whether the fountain in question was constructed on the same plan, I praised its beauty one day in Thiuli's presence, and inquired the architect. 'I built it myself,' cried he; 'and what you here see is the smallest merit of it, for the water comes at least a thousand yards from the brook, passing through a vaulted aqueduct, in which a man could walk with ease; and for all this I suggested the plan myself.' On hearing this, I often wished I had a man's strength to remove a stone on the side of the fountain, for then I could flee whither I would. Well, now I will show you this conduit, and through it you may gain the mansion by night, and release the two captives. But you must, at least, have two men with you, to overpower the men who keep guard over the seraglio."

Such was the liberated Fatima's scheme, and my brother Mustapha, although twice frustrated, took courage once more; hoping, with the help of Allah, to accomplish the plan she suggested. He promised her to provide for her return home, if she would aid him in gaining entrance into the castle. But one thought gave him some concern—how was he to find two or three trusty helpmates. Then he remembered Orbusan's dagger, and his promise to hasten to his assistance whenever he needed aid; so he issued with Fatima from the cemetery, to go in quest of the robber.

In the same town in which he had disguised himself as doctor, he bought a horse with his last pieces, and took a lodging for Fatima at a poor woman's in the suburbs. He, however, made off to the mountains, where he had met Orbusan for the first time, and in three days he reached his destination. He soon descried the well-known tents, and unexpectedly presented himself to Orbusan, who gave him a friendly welcome. He informed him of his abortive attempts, at which the grave robber

could not now and then refrain from a laugh; especially when he pictured to himself Doctor Chakuman Kabudibaba. At the little fellow's treachery he was furiously indignant, and swore he would hang him up with his own hand, wherever he found him; at the same time he promised my brother to lend him his services, as soon as ever he had refreshed himself after the fatigues of his journey. Mustapha stayed the night, therefore, in the robber's tent; but at early dawn they set out, Orbusan taking with him three of his bravest men, well mounted and well armed. They rode on at a smart pace, and in two days reached the little town where the liberated Fatima had been left behind. Thence they proceeded to the little wood from which Thiuli's castle might be discovered at a short distance, and in which they encamped, and waited the approach of night. As soon as it was dark, they stole, under Fatima's guidance, to the brook end of the conduit, and soon found themselves on the desired spot. At this point they left Fatima and a servant behind with the horses, and prepared to descend; before they did this, however, Fatima went very exactly through her former directions: passing the duct, they would reach the inner court, there, right and left, were two towers, each in a corner, and the sixth door, counting from the tower on the right, disclosed Fatima and Zoraida, under guard of two black slaves. Well supplied with arms and crow-bars, Mustapha, Orbusan, and two of the others descended into the aqueduct; they were soon up to their middle in water, but for all that they pressed manfully forwards. In half an hour they reached the fountain itself, and immediately laid to with their crowbars. The wall was thick and firm, but it could not long resist the united efforts of four men; and they soon had made a breach large enough for them to slip comfortably through. Orbusan passed it first, and helped the others after him. When all were in the court, they looked at the side of the castle, to see if they could find out the door described to them; but they were not agreed which it was, for counting leftways from the right tower, they found a door which had been walled up, and did not know whether Fatima had skipped over this or reckoned it with the rest. Orbusan, however, was not long in hesitation. "My good sword," cried he, "will open me every door," so he made for the sixth, and the rest followed him. They opened it, and found six black slaves lying on the ground asleep; and were just on the point of retiring on tip toe, because they saw they had missed the right entrance, when some one rose in the corner,

and in a well-known voice shouted for help. It was the little fellow from Orbusan's camp. Before the black slaves exactly knew what was going on, Orbusan made a rush at the little fellow, tore his sash in two, gagged him with it, and tied his hands behind his back; he then turned to the slaves, some of whom had been half bound by his followers, and assisted in completely overpowering them. They put their daggers to their breasts, and demanded where Mizrah and Nourmahal were; and the slaves confessed that they were in the adjoining apartment.

Mustapha rushed in, and there he found Fatima and Zoraida awoke by the noise. With all despatch they gathered up their trinkets and their clothes, and followed Mustapha. In the mean while the two other robbers proposed to Orbusan to plunder as they best could; but the latter forbade them. "It shall not be told of Orbusan," said he, "that he broke into houses by night, to pilfer gold."

Mustapha and the liberated girls now slipped hastily into the aqueduct, and Orbusan promised to follow. When they were gone, Orbusan and one of the robbers took the little fellow, and led him out into the court; they then wound a silken cord that they had brought with them round his neck, and hung him up on the highest point of the fountain; and having thus punished the treachery of that little wretch, they descended into the aqueduct themselves, and followed Mustapha. With tears in their eyes the girls thanked their generous preserver, Orbusan; but he only urged them to precipitate flight, for Thiuli Cos was likely to have them pursued in every direction.

It was a touching parting next day of Mustapha and his released ones from Orbusan; of a truth, they will never forget him. Fatima, however, the first who was freed, went in disguise to Balsora, and there embarked for her native place.

After a short and happy journey my friends arrived at home. The joy of meeting again was almost the death of my old father: the day after their arrival he gave a great entertainment, in which the whole town bore part. My brother had to tell his story to an assembly of friends and relatives, who unanimously praised him and the noble robber. When he had ended, my father rose, and led Zoraida to him: "So then would I revoke," said he in a solemn voice, "the curse from off thy head; take her here, as the reward which thou hast won by thy unwearied zeal; take too my paternal blessing, and may our town never be

wanting in men, who in brotherly love, in talent and enthusiasm, shall resemble thee."

The caravan had now reached the end of the desert, and delightedly did the travellers welcome the green fields, and the rich foliage of the trees; the sweet sight of which they had been deprived of for so many days. In a beautiful valley there was a caravansara, which they chose for their night quarters; and though it seemed to offer little comfort or refreshment, yet the whole party was more cheerful and confiding than ever; for the thought of having escaped all the perils and hardships attendant on a journey through the desert had opened every heart, and tuned their minds to mirth and joy. Muley, the young merchant, danced and sang songs, till he won a laugh even from the grave Zaleucus. But not contented with cheering his comrades by the dance and the song, he gave them the story he had promised; and began as follows:—

THE STORY OF LITTLE FLY.

In Nicea, my dear native city, there lived a man who was called "Little Fly;" I can remember him very well, although I was very young at the time, especially as I was half beaten to death by my father on his account. This Little Fly was an old fellow enough, when I knew him; but he was only from three to five feet high, with a figure too of the most comical cast, for his body, small and natty as it was, had to carry a head much larger and thicker than the heads of other people; he lived all alone in a large house, and even cooked for himself: nor would people in the town have known whether he was alive or dead, for he only went out once a month, had not a thick smoke risen from his chimney at the hour of dinner. Of an evening, to be sure, he was often seen walking to and fro on the roof: yet, from the street, they used to think it was only his great head running about. My companions and I were mischievous fellows, fond of teasing and laughing at every body; so it was always a high day with us when Little Fly went out. We met regularly before his house, and waited till he came; and then when the door opened, and first the huge head, with the still huger turban, peeped out, and the rest of the little body followed, bedizened in a threadbare cloak, wide breeches, and a broad sash, with such a long dagger hanging to it, that we couldn't tell whether Fly dangled on the dagger, or the dagger on Fly; when he came out in this trim, the air rang with our huzzas, we threw up our caps, and danced like mad creatures about him. Little Fly, however, greeted us with a solemn nod, and went his way slowly down the street, shuffling all the time with his feet, for he had large wide slippers on, such as I had never seen before. We boys always ran after him, shouting "Little Fly, Little Fly!" We had a droll little rhyme too,

which we now and then sang in honour of him: it ran thus:—

> "Little Fly, Little Fly,
> Large enough's thy whereabout—
> Once a month thou goest out;
> Thou'rt a dwarfy brave and small,
> And thy head's a mountain tall;
> Turn thee round then to our cry,
> Run and catch us, Little Fly."

We often had our fun in this way, and to my shame I must confess I was the worst of the bunch; for I twitched his cloak, and I once got behind him, and trod so close upon his great slippers, that plump he fell. This was a most laughable prank to me, but my laughter soon ceased when I saw Little Fly go towards my father's house; he went straight in, and stayed some time. I hid behind the door, and saw him come out again, my father showing the way, while with the greatest complaisance he gave him his hand at the door, and with a number of bows bade him farewell. I felt anything but comfortable; I therefore remained a long time in my hiding-place; but at last, hunger, of which I had a greater horror than of stripes, drove me out, and with a humbled air and a drooping crest I presented myself before my father.

"You have been insulting worthy Fly, as I hear," said he, in an angry tone. "I will tell you this man's story, and then I am sure you will not laugh at him again; but first, and afterwards, you shall have commons."

Commons were five-and-twenty stripes, which he was only too exact in scoring. To this end he took a long pipe tube, screwed off the amber mouth-piece, and belaboured me worse than ever.

When the measure of the five-and-twenty was full, he ordered me to mark what he had to say, and began Little Fly's story.

"His father, whose proper name is Mucrah, was a poor but respectable man here in Nicea. He used to live almost as secluded as his son does now. To the latter he had a dislike, because he was ashamed of his dwarfish figure, and so he had him brought up in ignorance. In his sixteenth year Little Fly was still a playful child; and his father, a grave man, was always scolding him for being so stupid and silly, when he ought long ago to have been out of leading-strings.

"But one day old Fly had a bad fall, of which he died, leaving his little son poor and ignorant. His cruel relations, to whom his father owed more than he could pay, turned the poor little fellow out of doors, and advised him to go out into the world, and try his fortune. Little Fly answered that he was ready to start; he only begged his father's clothes, and these were granted him. Now his father had been a tall, stout man, and so the clothes would not fit. Fly, however, soon knew what to do: he cut away the over length, and then put the things on. But he seemed to have forgotten that in width too he ought to have reduced them: hence comes the strange garb which he wears even to the present day. The huge turban, the broad sash, the wide trowsers, the blue little cloak, all these are heir-looms of his father's, which he has worn ever since his death. When he was dressed as I have said, he stuck his father's long Damascus dagger into his sash, seized a little stick, and trudged out at the city gate.

"He wandered on cheerily the whole day, for, to be sure, he had gone forth to seek his fortune. When he saw a potsherd on the ground glittering in the sun, he was sure to put it in his pocket, in the idea that it would change into the most beautiful diamond. When he beheld the cupola of a mosque shining like fire, or a lake sparkling like a mirror, he made off to it in ecstacy, for he thought he had got into an enchanted land. But ah! those cheating phantoms vanished on approach, and too soon was he reminded by his tired limbs and craving stomach, that he was only in the country of mortals. Two days he had travelled on in this way, hungry and sad, and in despair of finding fortune: the fruits of the field had been his only food, the hard earth his bed; when on the morning of the third day, he beheld from some high ground a large city. Clearly shone the half-moon on its battlements; gay flags waved upon the house-tops, and seemed to beckon Little Fly to come to them. In amazement he stood still, surveying the city and the country round. 'Yes, here Little Fly will make his fortune,' said he to himself, 'here or nowhere?' and he cut a caper in the air, in spite of his weariness. He then summoned all his remaining strength, and walked towards the town. It had seemed quite near, yet he did not reach it before noon, for his little limbs almost refused to do their office, and he was forced to sit down under a palm-tree and rest himself. At last he arrived at the city gate. He put his cloak straight, tied his turban more prettily, widened his sash, and stuck his dagger

more awry; then he wiped the dust off his shoes, grasped his little stick, and went manfully in. He had passed along a great many streets without a single door opening, or any one calling out, as he had expected: 'Little Fly, come in; eat, drink, and rest thy feet.' So he was just giving another longing look at a fine large house, when a window opened, and an old dame looked out, crying in a singing tone:

'Come, make haste; come, make haste,
Of my cooking to taste;
I've been laying the cloth,
So make free with the broth,
Quick, neighbours, quick;
It's so hot and so thick.'

"The house door opened, and Fly saw a number of dogs and cats go in. He stood some moments in doubt whether he should obey the invitation; but at last he took heart, and entered. A pair of young kittens were just before; so he thought he would follow them, because most likely they knew the kitchen better than he.

"On going up stairs, he was met by the same old dame who had looked out of the window. She looked at him churlishly, and asked his business. 'Why, you asked every one to come and taste your broth,' answered Little Fly, 'and because I am so hungry I am come too.' The old woman burst out laughing, and said: 'Where are you from, you odd little fellow? The whole town knows that I cook for no one but my dear cats, and sometimes invite their neighbours to keep them company, as you see.' Little Fly told the old dame how hardly he fared after his father's death, and begged of her to let him eat, for once, with her cats. When he had eaten and refreshed himself, the old crone looked at him for some time, and then said: 'Little Fly, stay in my service; you will have little to do, and shall be well kept.'

"Little Fly liked the broth; so he consented and became Dame Ahavzi's servant. He had an easy, but a queer sort of a place. When the old dame went out, he had to take care of the cats; when they dined, he had to help them to he different dishes, and of a night lay them in silken cushions, and tuck them up in velvet quilts. There was some little dogs in the house too, that he had to attend to: though there was not such a fuss made with them as with the cats. The latter Dame Ahaviza made as much of as if they were her own

children. Upon the whole, Fly lived as lonely a life as in his father's house; for, saving his mistress, he saw nothing but cats and dogs the whole day.

"For a time the little fellow had a pleasant life of it. He always had plenty to eat and to drink, and little to do; and the old dame seemed very pleased with him: but by degrees the cats grew naughty. When the old woman went out, they leapt about the room like creatures possessed, threw every thing about, and broke many a beautiful piece of ware that lay in their way. But the moment they heard the old creature coming up stairs, they sneaked off to their cushions, and wagged their tails at her as if nothing had happened. Then Dame Ahavzi used to fly in a passion, when she saw her room all odds and ends, and lay all the blame on Fly; and he, poor fellow, could say nothing; for, protest his innocence how he would, she much sooner believed her demure-looking cats than her servant.

"So Little Fly began to be very sad, to think that, even here, he had not found the good fortune he sought; and he secretly resolved to leave Dame Ahavzi's service. But, having experienced on his first journey, how ill people fare without money, he made up his mind to get hold, some way or other, of the wages which his mistress had promised, but never paid him.

"Now, in Dame Ahavzi's house there was a room which was always kept closed up, and of which he had never seen the inside; but he had often heard the old crone rummaging about in it, and, for the life of him, he longed to know what she had hid there. While he was thinking about money for his journey, it occurred to him that the dame's treasures were very likely concealed there; but the door was always locked, and so he could not get at the hoard.

"One morning, when Dame Ahavzi was out, one of the little dogs that had always been treated very snappishly by the old woman, and whose good graces Fly had eminently won by all sorts of kindness, pulled him by his wide trousers, making such gestures as showed that he wished him to follow him. Fly, being fond of playing with the dog, did follow, when, lo and behold! the little dog led him into Dame Ahavzi's bed-room to a little door which he had never noticed before. The door was soon opened. The little dog went in, and Fly followed, when how delighted he was to find himself in the very room which had so long been the object of his wishes! He looked about everywhere, to see if he could find some money; however,

he found nothing; there were nothing but old clothes and strangely shaped cups, and such like utensils, lying about. One of these particularly drew his attention: it was of crystal, and beautiful figures were carved upon it. He took it up, turning it round and round; but—oh! how terrible!—he had not noticed that it had a very insecure lid. The lid fell and broke in a thousand pieces.

"For a long time Little Fly stood panic-struck. Now his fate was decided; now he must fly, or the old crone would beat him, and perhaps kill him. In a trice his journey was resolved upon, and he was only looking round once more, to see if none of Dame Ahavzi's things would be of service to him on the way, when a pair of immense slippers met his eye. To be sure they were not very handsome; but his own could not stand another journey, and these others pleased him by their size; for, if he once had them on, people would, in all conscience, be able to see that he was out of his childish toggery. So he kicked off his old shoes, and stepped into the great slippers. A little stick, too, with a beautifully cut lion's head, seemed to him to be standing far too idle, in a corner; he took this with him too, and then hurried out of the room. He gained his own garret, put on his little cloak, set his father's turban on his head, stuck the dagger in his sash, and left house and town behind him as fast as his legs would carry him. He ran on and on, in fear of the old woman, till he was almost spent with fatigue. In his whole life he had never gone so fast; he even fancied he should never stop running, for an unseen power seemed to hurry him along. At last, he remarked that this must have some secret connection with the slippers; for they kept darting forward and forward, and bearing him with them. He tried every way to stand still, but without success: so he cried out, in the greatest distress, as people do to horses—'Wo!—Wo!—Wo!' On this the slippers stopped, and Fly flung himself exhausted on the earth.

"The slippers pleased him vastly; so, at last, then, he had got something to help him along in the world on his quest of good fortune. He fell asleep, in spite of his joy, out of pure exhaustion; for Little Fly's body, with its very heavy head, could not stand much. In his dreams the little dog appeared to him, that had helped him to his booty in Dame Ahavzi's house, and said to him—'Dear Fly, you don't yet quite understand the use of the slippers. Do you know, if you turn round three times in them, on your heel, you may fly away wherever you

like; and with the little stick you may find treasures, for where gold is hid it will give three knocks on the ground, and where silver is, two.' Such was Little Fly's dream; and, when he awoke, he thought of the wonderful dream, and made up his mind to make a trial on the spot. He put on the slippers, stood on one foot, and began to turn round on his heel. But any one who has tried to do this trick three times running, in a very large slipper, will not be surprised that Little Fly did not succeed at first, especially when he remembers that his heavy head toppled first on this side and then on that.

"The poor little fellow fell plump on his nose once or twice; yet he would not be discouraged repeating the attempt, and at last he succeeded. He went round on his heel like a whirligig, wished himself in the next large town, and see—the slippers flapped up into the air, sped with the swiftness of the wind through the clouds, and before Little Fly knew what he was about, he found himself in a large market-place, where a mass of booths had been put up, and throngs of men were passing up and down. He went about among the people, but he soon found it better to seek out some less frequented street, for, in the market, one person or the other would tread on his slippers and nearly trip him up; or he would run his long cumbersome dagger against this man or that, and narrowly escape hard blows.

"So Little Fly now really set about thinking what would be the best for him to do, to earn a little money. To be sure he had a little stick which could point out hidden treasures to him; but how was he to find a place where gold or silver was buried? Besides, in case of need, he could have made a show of himself for money; but he was too proud for this. At last his lightness of foot occurred to him. 'Perhaps,' thought he, 'my slippers may gain me a living.' And so he resolved to hire himself as running footman; and, expecting that the king of the city would pay his services best, he made inquiries at the palace. At the gate stood a sentinel, who asked him what he wanted there. On his replying that he wanted a place, he was directed to the overseer of the slaves. To this man he made his business known, begging him to get him a place among the king's messengers.

"The overseer took a glance at him from head to foot, and said, "What! with your little feet, scarcely a span long, you want to be a royal runner? Be off with you, I'm not placed here to waste my time on every fool.'

"Little Fly, however, assured him he was quite in earnest, and

that he was ready to run a race with the fastest of them. All this seemed very laughable to the overseer. He bade him be ready for a race in the evening, took him into the kitchen, and saw him well supplied with meat and drink; and then he went to the king, and told him about the little man and his offer. The king was a merry fellow, so he was very pleased that the overseer had kept Little Fly for a bit of fun. He gave him orders to make arrangements in a meadow behind the palace, that the race might be viewed with convenience by his whole court; and charged him once more to take great care of the dwarf. Then he told the princes and princesses what a sight they were to see that evening. They again told their servants, and towards evening the expectation of every one was on the stretch; and all who had legs to carry them went streaming towards the meadow, where scaffoldings had been raised, that they might see the boastful dwarf run his race.

"When the king and his sons and daughters had taken their places on the platform, Little Fly stepped forward, and made the grand people a most graceful bow. There was a general shout of joy when the little fellow showed himself. Such a funny figure had never been seen there before. The little body with the huge head, the little cloak and the wide trowsers, the long dagger in the broad sash, the tiny feet in the immense slippers —no! it was too droll a sight for the people to keep from bursting with laughter. But Little Fly would not be put out by their laughing. He took his place; and, resting on his little cane, awaited his rival.

"The overseer of the slaves, by Fly's express desire, had picked out the fastest runner. The latter now came forth, took his stand by his little rival, and they both waited for the signal. As had been agreed upon, Princess Amarza waved her veil; and like two arrows shot off at the same mark, the two racers flew along over the meadow. At first Fly's opponent had far the best of the start; but the little dwarf made bravely after him on his slipper-work, overtook him, passed him, and was at the goal long before the other came up panting for breath. Sheer amazement held the spectators for some moments speechless; but when the king clapped his hands, they all shouted at once, 'Hurrah to Little Fly, the winner of the race!'

"In the meantime, Little Fly had been led up: he threw himself at the king's feet, saying, 'Most mighty king, I have here given thee only a slight proof of my skill; wilt thou now accord me a place among thy runners?'

"But the king answered 'Nay; thou shalt be my own body-runner, and always be about my person, good Fly. Every year thou shalt receive a hundred pieces of gold as wages, and dine at the table of my chief servants.'

"So Fly at last thought he had found the good fortune he had so long been in search of, and was cheerful and glad at heart. He was delighted, too, at the special regard of the king, for he employed him on his fastest and most secret errands; and these he dispatched with the greatest exactness and the most inconceivable swiftness.

"But the other servants of the king were not his friends, because they did not like to see themselves supplanted in their master's favour by a dwarf who understood nothing but running fast. So they formed many a conspiracy against him to work his fall; but they all failed to shake the great confidence which the king reposed in his privy body-runner; for to this dignity he rose in a very short time.

"Fly, who was no stranger to these proceedings against him, did not meditate revenge. No: he had too good a heart for that; but he thought of some means of making himself necessary to, and beloved by, his enemies. His little staff, which in better times he had forgotten, now occurred to him. If he could find treasures, he thought, the courtiers would soon become attached to him. He had often heard that the present king's father had once buried a great deal of his treasure when the enemy invaded his land. It was said too, that he had died without being able to tell his son the secret. From that time forth, therefore, Fly always took his little staff with him, in the hope of some day passing the place where the money of the old king had been buried.

"One evening chance led him to a remote part of the palace-garden, which he very seldom visited, when, all of a sudden, he felt the stick jerk in his hand, and strike three times against the ground. Now he knew well enough what this meant; so he drew his dagger, scratched marks in the surrounding trees, and stole back into the palace; there he procured a spade, and waited till night favoured his design.

"This treasure-digging, though, gave Little Fly more trouble than he had thought for; his arms were much too weak, his spade too large and heavy, and he worked about two hours before he had got a couple of feet deep. At last, he struck against something hard that sounded like iron; this made him dig on more stoutly, and he had soon brought to light a large

iron lid. He went down into the hole to see what it might be that the lid covered, and there it was, a large pot filled with gold pieces. But his little strength was not enough to lift the pot, so he put as much in his trousers and his girdle as he could carry, filling his cloak at the same time; and then he covered up the rest with great care, and bore it on his back; but really, if he had not had his slippers on, he never could have stirred from the spot, the burden of gold weighed him down so; as it was, he reached his room without being seen, and hid his hoard under the cushions of his sofa.

"Now, when Little Fly found himself possessed of so much gold, he thought the tables would turn, and that he should gain many patrons and warm adherents among his enemies at court; but that was proof enough that good Fly could not have had a very careful education, or else he would not easily have reckoned on gaining true friends by money. The money that he now dealt out by handfuls excited the envy of the other servants at court. Ahuli, the master of the kitchen, said he was a coiner; Achmet, the overseer of slaves, said he had talked the king out of it; Arkaz, the treasurer, who was his bitterest enemy, and who would himself have been glad to make a gripe at the king's treasure, said outright, he had stolen it; so, to make matters sure, they conspired together, and the upper butler one day presented himself sad and downcast before the king. His mournful gestures were so striking that the king asked him what was the matter with him.

"'Ah!' answered he, 'it makes me sad to think I have lost the favour of my master.'

"'What art thou raving about? Carchuz,' rejoined the king; 'since when have I not let the sun of my favour light upon you?'

"The upper butler answered that he loaded the chief body-runner for instance with gold, but gave nothing to his poor faithful servants.

"The king was very much astonished at this news: he inquired into Little Fly's distribution of gold, and the conspirators soon raised in him a suspicion that Fly, in some way or other, had stolen the money out of the treasury.

"This turn of affairs was very pleasing to the treasurer, who was at no time fond of giving in an account. The king therefore ordered Little Fly's every step to be secretly watched, in order, if possible, to catch him in the fact. Now, in the night of this fatal day, when finding his store brought very low by his

generosity, Little Fly took his spade, and stole into the palace-garden, to fetch a new supply from his hidden treasure; the sentinels, led on by Ahuli, the master of the kitchen, and Arka, the treasurer, followed at a distance; and just as he was going to empty the gold from the pot into his cloak, they fell on him, bound him, and led him immediately before the king. The latter, sour at the interruption of his sleep, received his poor chief body-runner very ungraciously, and began his trial at once. They had taken the pot quite out of the ground, and placed it with the spade and the cloak full of gold at the king's feet.

"The treasurer gave evidence to having surprised Little Fly with his guards, just as he had buried the jar of gold in the ground; upon which the king asked the accused whether it was true, and where he got the pieces from. Little Fly, in the consciousness of his innocence, declared he had found the pot in the garden, and that he did not want to bury it, but to dig it out.

"All present laughed hard at this excuse; but the king, in the greatest rage at the supposed audacity of the little fellow, cried out—'What, wretch! thou wilt palm so stupid and shameful a lie upon the king, after robbing him? Treasurer Arka, I demand of thee to tell me whether thou recognizest this sum of gold for the same which is wanting in my treasury?'

"The treasurer answered that he was quite up with his accounts; that for some time, as much as that and still more had been missing from the royal treasury, and he could take oath that this was the stolen coin.

"The king therefore ordered Little Fly to be put in heavy chains, and led to the dungeon in the tower; but he gave the gold to the treasurer, for him to carry it back to the treasury.

"Pleased with the happy issue of the business, Arka went away, and told over his shining pieces at home; but, wicked man! he never made known that a slip of paper was at the bottom of the jar, with these words written on it:—'*The enemy has overrun my land, so I here hide a part of my treasure. The curse of the king light on him who finds it, and delivers it not to my son.*—KING SADI.'

"Little Fly gave way to doleful thoughts in his dungeon; he knew that death was the punishment awarded to theft committed on the royal estate; yet he did not like to betray the secret of the little staff to the king, because he had good reason to fear he would by that means be deprived of both that and

the slippers. His slippers too could be of no use to him, for as he was locked to the wall by a heavy chain, he could not turn upon his heel, torment himself as he would. But next day, when sentence of death was announced to him, he thought it would be better after all to live without the little staff, than to die with it; so he craved a secret audience of the king, and divulged the secret. The king at first put no faith in his confession; but Little Fly promised him a proof of it, if he would reverse his doom. The king pledged him his word, had some gold buried without letting Little Fly see where, and ordered him to go and look about with his staff. In a few moments he had found it, for the little staff struck markedly three times on the ground. Then the king saw that the treasurer had cheated him, and sent him, according to eastern custom, a silken twine, to strangle himself with. But to Little Fly, he said—'To be sure I promised thee thy life, but it seems to me thou possessest not this secret of the little staff only; so thou shalt remain a captive for life, if thou wilt not confess what it has to do with thy running.' Little Fly, who, with one night in the tower, had lost all taste for longer endurance, confessed that all his skill lay in the slippers; but still he did not tell the king anything about the turning round three times on his heel. The king slipped on the slippers himself, to make a trial, and ran like one mad about the garden; often would he have stopped, but he knew not how to bring the slippers to a stand still; and Fly, who could not deny himself this little revenge, let him run until he fell down quite exhausted.

"When he came to himself again, he was very angry with Little Fly for having permitted him to run till he was quite out of breath. 'I have pledged thee my word to grant thee thy life and liberty; but within twelve hours thou must quit my kingdom, or else I will have thee tied up by the neck.' But he had the slippers and the little stick laid up in his treasury. Poor as ever, Little Fly wandered out of the land, cursing the folly which had cheated him into the belief that he might play a great part at court. The country out of which they had turned him was, fortunately, not large; so in eight hours he had reached the borders, although walking without his dear slippers was grievous drudgery to him.

"As soon as he had passed the frontiers, he quitted the common road, to seek the loneliest thicket in the woods, and there live by himself; for he was out of sorts with all mankind. In a thick forest he came to a place which seemed exactly suited to

the plan he had formed. A clear brook, skirted by high and shady fig-trees, and a soft lawn, invited him to rest there; and he threw himself down with the resolution not to touch any kind of food again, but there to await his death. Full of sad thoughts about death, he fell asleep; but when he woke, and hunger began to torment him, he bethought himself that hunger, after all, was a dangerous matter, and looked about for something to eat.

"Delicious ripe figs were hanging on the trees under which he had been sleeping; he climbed up to gather some, ate them with a keen relish, and then went down to the brook to quench his thirst. But how great was his alarm when the water showed him his head graced with two huge ears and a long, thick nose. In affright he put his hands to his ears, and in reality they were more than half an ell long,—'I deserve ass's ears,' cried he 'for I have trodden my good fortune under foot like an ass." He wandered about among the trees; but he was once more obliged to take the figs, as there was nothing else to eat on the trees; and strange to say,—when it occurred to him, after eating the figs a second time, that his ears might perhaps have room under his large turban,—he felt that they were gone! He ran back to the brook in an instant, to convince himself it was so, and sooth it *was;* his ears had recovered their former shape, and his long, ugly nose was no more to be seen. Then he noticed how all this had happened—from the first fig-tree he had got the long nose and ears, and the second had cured him; with joy he saw that his good destiny had once more given him the means of prospering. He therefore gathered as much as he could from every tree, and went back into the country he had just before quitted. There he put on other clothes, so that it was impossible to recognise him, and then went on towards the town where the king lived. He soon arrived there.

"It was just the season at which ripe fruits were pretty scarce; so he took his seat at the gate of the palace, because he knew of old that such rarities were bought up by the master of the kitchen, for the royal table. He had not been sitting long, when he saw the man in question coming towards him across the yard. He eyed the different wares of the different dealers who had met at the palace-gate, and at last he caught sight of Fly's little basket. 'Ah! a rare morsel,' cried he; 'that would suit his majesty, to a certainty. What do you want for the whole lot?' Little Fly asked a fair price, and they soon con-

cluded their bargain. The master of the kitchen gave the basket to a slave, and went away; bnt Little Fly made himself scarce, for he feared that if the disaster fell on the heads of the court, he might be hunted up as the seller, and be punished.

"The king was very merry at table that day, and again and again praised the master of the kitchen for his good viands, and the care with which he always selected all that was choicest for him; but the master of the kitchen, who very well knew what a dainty morsel he had in reserve chuckled most pleasantly, dropping, now and then, such half hints as these—'We're not out of the wood yet;' or, 'All's well that ends well.' So that the princesses were very curious to know what could be coming; but when he served up the figs, a general cry of 'Ah!' escaped the lips of the company.

"'How ripe, how delicious they look!' cried the king. 'Master of the kitchen, you're a capital fellow, every inch of you, and deserve our most particular favour.'

"So saying, the king, who was very sparing of such dainties, portioned out the figs with his own hands. Every prince and princess had two, the ladies at court, the viziers and agas *one*, and the rest he placed before him, and began to devour them with the greatest relish.

"'But gracious me, father, how odd you look,' cried Princess Amarza, all at once.

"They all looked in astonishment at the king; huge ears were hanging from his head, a long nose drooped over his chin; and they turned their eyes on each other, too, in amazement and terror, for they all were more or less graced with this strange head-dress.

"The dismay of the court may be imagined. All the physi cians of the city were instantly sent for; they came in crowds, prescribed pills and draughts; but the ears and noses remained fixed to their places. One of the princes was even operated upon; it was all in vain, the ears grew as fast as they were cut off.

"Fly had heard all about this in his hiding-place, and now he knew it was time to proceed to business. With the money which he had got for the figs he procured himself the disguise of a learned doctor, and a long beard of goat's hair completed the cheat.

"With a bag full of figs he then went to the king's palace, and offered his services as a foreign physician. At first they put very little faith in him; but when he had given one of the princes a fig to eat, and restored nose and ears to their former state, every one was for being healed by the foreign physician. The

king, however, first took him silently by the hand, and led him to his own apartment; he there opened a door which led to the treasury, and signed to Fly to follow him. 'Here are my treasures,' said the king; 'choose what you will, and it shall be yours, if you free me from this shameful deformity.'

"This was music to the ears of Little Fly. The moment he entered, he had seen his slippers on the floor, and his little staff lying close by them. So he walked about as if busy in admiring the king's treasures; but scarcely had he reached his slippers, when he slipped into them all of a moment, tore away his false beard, and showed the astonished king the well-known features of his disgraced Fly. 'Faithless king!' said he, 'who hast rewarded faithful services with ingratitude, take as a well-merited punishment the hateful form which thou now wearest. I leave thee thy ears that they may daily remind thee of little Fly.' So saying, he turned round quickly on his heel, wished himself far away, and before the king could call for help, Little Fly was gone. Since then Fly has lived here in great comfort, but has kept quite to himself. Experience has made him a wise man, who, even if his figure have something strange in it, much rather deserves your admiration than your mockery."

Such was the story my father gave me. I assured him how sorry I was for my rude behaviour to the good little man, and he forgave me the other half of the punishment in arrear. I told my playfellows the wonderful fortunes of Fly, and we grew so fond of him, that not one of us mocked him any more. On the contrary, we honoured him as long as he lived, and always bowed as low to him as to the cadi and mufti.

The travellers resolved to stay a day in the caravansara, to strengthen themselves and the beasts of burden for the rest of the journey. The merriment of the yesterday continued on the morrow, and they amused themselves in various ways; but after dinner they called upon Ali Sizah, the fifth merchant, to do his duty towards the rest, and to tell his tale. He answered that his life had been too barren in striking incidents for him to think of giving them a story out of it, so he said he would tell them something else, and immediately began the "Fairy Tale of the False Prince."

THE FAIRY TALE OF THE FALSE PRINCE.

THERE was once an honest journeyman-tailor, named Labucan, who had been apprentice to a clever master in Alexandria. Labucan could not be said to be awkward with his needle; on the contrary, he could do very fine work; and they wronged him, too, when they plumply called him idle. Yet all was not quite right with our journeyman, for he would often work away for long hours, till the needle glowed in his hand and the thread smoked again, and then he turned out such a job as no one else could show; but at other times—and these, alas! came too frequently—he would sit buried in thought, with a fixed and vacant stare, and something so strange in his face and manner, that his master and workmates, when they spoke of him in this state, always used to say, "Labucan is looking grand again."

But on Fridays, when other people went quietly home from prayers to their work, Labucan would issue from the mosque in a fine habit, which he had saved up his earnings to buy with great difficulty, and would stalk slowly and proudly through the squares and streets of the city; and when this or that workmate gave him a "Peace be with thee!" or, "How does friend Labucan do?" he would graciously sign with his hand, or, on unusually great occasions, give an important bow; and when his master said to him in fun—"A prince is lost in thee, Labucan!" he was pleased at it, and replied, "What, you have noticed that, too?" or, "I've thought so a long time."

So the honest journeyman had gone on for a pretty good time, his master bearing with his folly, because in other things he was a good fellow and a clever workman, when one day Selim, the sultan's brother, who was just then on his way through Alexandria, sent a festal robe to his master to have it altered in some way; and the latter put it into Labucan's hands,

because he did finer work than the rest. Now, in the evening, when master and journeymen had all gone away to refresh themselves after the day's labour, an irresistible longing drove Labucan again into the shop, where the robe of the sultan's brother was hanging. For a long time he stood before it full of thought, now admiring the splendour of the embroidery, and now the shot colours of the silk and the velvet. He could not help putting it on, when, lo, and behold! it fitted him just as if it had been made for him.

"Am not I a prince with the best of them?" said he, stalking up and down the room. "Has not my master himself said that I was born to be a prince?"

With the garment, the journeyman seemed to have put on quite a royal turn of thought. He could not think himself anything but a renowned king's son; and so he resolved to go abroad, and quit a place where people had been so foolish as not to recognise his innate dignity under the veil of his low employ. The costly robe seemed sent him by some kind fairy; he was very cautious not to think lightly of so precious a gift. So he took what little cash he had, and wandered, under favour of night, out of the gates of Alexandria.

The new prince everywhere excited astonishment in his wanderings; for the costly garb, and his grave, majestic bearing, were not at all suited to a wayfarer on foot. When he was questioned on the matter, he used to reply, with an air of mystery, that there were reasons for it best known to himself. But when he found that he made himself ridiculous by his wanderings on foot, he bought an old horse for a trifle, which suited him very well, as it never put him to the necessity—so fatal to his staid composure and gentleness—of showing off as a skilful rider, for this he was far from being.

One day, as he was going his way, step by step, on his Marva—for so he had named his horse—another horseman joined him, and begged leave to ride in his company, because the road would be much shorter to them while chatting with one another. The horseman was a cheerful young man, with handsome features and an engaging address. He had got into conversation with Labucan as to "where he had come from" and "whither he was going;" and it proved that he, like the journeyman, was going into the world without any particular plan. He said his name was Omar, that he was the nephew of the unfortunate Basha of Cairo, and was now on his road to execute a commission which his uncle had given him on his death-bed. Labucan was not

quite so frank in telling his circumstances; but he gave his fellow-traveller to understand that he was of high extraction, and was travelling for amusement.

The two young men were pleased with each other, and proceeded on their way. On the second day of their travelling in company, Labucan asked his companion, Omar, about the commissions that he had to attend to; and, to his astonishment, received the following account:—

"Elfi Bey, the Basha of Cairo, had brought up Omar from his earliest infancy, and his ward had never known his parents. Now, after Elfi had been attacked by his enemies, and obliged to fly, mortally wounded, after three unfortunate battles, he informed his ward that he was not his nephew, but the son of a powerful monarch, who, alarmed by the predictions of an astrologer, had sent his son away from his court, swearing that he would not see him again before his twenty-second birth-day. Elfi Bey had not told him his father's name; but enjoined him most earnestly to repair to the famous pillar of El-Serujab—four days' journey east of Alexandria—on the fourth day of the approaching month of Ramadan, on which he would be two-and-twenty years of age. There he was to present a dagger to certain men who would be standing by the pillar, with these words—'Here am I whom you seek!' and if they answer—'Praised be the Prophet who hath preserved thee,' he need only follow them, and they would conduct him to his father."

Labucan was very much astonished at this information. From that time forward he regarded Prince Omar with an eye of envy; angry with fate for having given the dignity of a royal prince to one who already passed for the nephew of a mighty basha; while he, who was endowed with all the requisite qualifications of a prince, had received, as it were in mockery, an obscure birth and a common calling. He began making comparisons between himself and the Prince. He was obliged to confess him to be a man of very animated countenance, fine speaking eyes, a well-arched nose, gentle and obliging behaviour; in short, all those exterior qualifications which are apt to recommend were natural to him. But gifted as his companion appeared to him, he was fain to grant that a Labucan would most likely be more welcome to the royal father than the real prince.

These thoughts haunted him the whole day, and full of them he went to sleep at the inn where they stopped for the night; and in the morning, when he awoke and cast his eye upon Prince Omar, who slept so soundly, dreaming perhaps of his

certain good fortune, he formed an idea of gaining, by cunning or violence, what an adverse destiny had denied him. The dagger, the sign of recognition for the returning Prince, was sticking in the sash of the sleeper; he drew it softly, that he might plunge it into the breast of its owner. But the gentle soul of the journeyman took fright at the thought of murder; he contented himself with taking the dagger, with having the Prince's superior horse saddled for himself; and before Omar awoke and found himself defeated in all his hopes, his faithless companion was several miles in advance of him.

It was the very first day of the holy month of Ramaden when Labucan committed the robbery on the Prince, and so he had four days to reach El-Serujah, a place very well known to him. Although the part in which this pillar stood could at most be only two days' journey distant, yet he hastened to make good his arrival, for fear of being overtaken by the real prince. At the end of the third day he descried the pillar. It stood on a slight eminence on a large plain, and might be seen five or six miles off. His heart beat higher at the sight of it; although for the two last days he had amply revolved the part he had to play, yet his bad conscience made him a little fearful. Then again the thought of being born to be a prince encouraged him again; so that he proceeded under a greater sense of comfort to his destination.

The country about El-Serujah was uninhabited and desolate, and the new prince would have been somewhat put to a puzzle for sustenance if he had not provided himself beforehand for several days. So he lay down by his horse under some palm trees, and there awaited his further fortunes.

Towards noon, next day, he saw a long train of horses and camels coming over the plain towards the pillar of El-Serujah. The cavalcade stopped at the foot of the hill on which the pillar stood; magnificent tents were pitched, and the whole had the appearance of the travelling retinue of a rich basha or sheik. Labucan guessed that the crowd of people which he saw had come thither on his account, and he would have been glad to have shown them at once their future ruler; but he moderated his eagerness to take the character of prince, for the very next morning would amply satisfy his most daring wishes.

The morning sun awoke the delighted tailor to the most critical moment of his life, one which was to raise him from so humble a station to the side of a princely father. It is true the injustice of the step he had taken occurred to him as he was

bridling his horse for his ride to the pillar; and many a thought reminded him of the pain the Prince must suffer in being cheated of his fairest hopes; but the throw was made, he could not undo what was already done, and his self-love whispered him that he looked grand enough to represent himself to the mightiest monarch as his son. Encouraged by these reflections, he vaulted on his horse, mustered all his courage to break into a decent gallop, and in less than a quarter of an hour had reached the foot of the hill. He dismounted, and tied his horse to a shrub, of which there were a great number growing on the spot, and drawing out Prince Omar's dagger he ascended the hill. At the foot of the pillar stood six men round an old man of high-born royal mien; the costly caftan of cloth of gold, confined by a shawl of white cachemire; the snowy turban set with sparkling gems, bespoke a man of wealth and dignity. Labucan approached him, bowed low before him, and presenting him the dagger said—"Here am I whom ye seek."

"Praised be the Prophet who hath preserved thee," replied the old man, weeping for joy. "Embrace thy old father, my dear son Omar."

The worthy tailor was deeply touched by this solemn address, and sank in mingled ecstacy and shame into the arms of the aged prince. But a single moment only was he allowed to enjoy the transport of his new exaltation. On rising from the prince's arms, he saw a rider scouring over the plain and making direct for the hill; both horseman and horse had an unsual look, the steed seemed either too obstinate or too tired to proceed, and shambled along at a drawling pace that was neither a walk nor a trot, while the horseman urged it on with hand and foot. Too quickly did Labucan recognise his horse Marva and the real prince, Omar; but the wicked spirit of lies had already entered him, and he resolved, come what might, to assert his assumed rights with a brazen air.

Even at a distance the horseman had been seen to beckon with his hand; but now, in spite of the sorry trot of Marva, he had reached the foot of the hill.

"Stop," cried he, "stop, whoever ye may be, and allow not yourselves to be deceived by the most infamous of impostors. My name is Omar, a name which no mortal man shall venture to abuse!"

At this turn of affairs blank astonishment showed itself in the faces of the bystanders; the old man seemed especially struck with amazement, and looked questioningly now at this

one and then at that. But Labucan, with forced composure, said to him, "Most gracious lord and father, be not led wrong by that man there; he is, I believe, a crazy journeyman tailor from Alexandria, of the name of Labucan, who rather deserves our pity than our anger."

The Prince was almost mad at these words: foaming with rage, he would have rushed on Labucan; but the bystanders kept him back, and the King said to him, "In good truth, my dear son, the poor man is beside himself: let him be bound and placed upon one of our dromedaries; perhaps we shall be able to relieve his misfortune."

By this time Omar's fury had subsided; bathed in tears he cried out to the King, "My heart tells me thou art my father: by the memory of my mother, hear me!"

"He is beginning to rave again," replied the King; "how can the man get such wild thoughts into his head!"

So saying, he took Labucan's arm, and made him his escort down the hill. They then mounted beautiful horses, caparisoned with rich saddle-cloths, and rode over the plain at the head of their retinue. But the others tied poor Omar's hands, and bound him fast on a dromedary; while two riders were perpetually at his side, keeping a watchful eye on his every movement. The aged Prince was Sadud, the Sultan of the Weckabites. He had long been without offspring, when at last the child was born to him, which he had so long been wishing for: but the astrologers of whom he inquired concerning the destiny of his son, gave answer:—"That till the period of attaining his two-and-twentieth year, he was in danger of being oppressed by an enemy:" so, to make matters quite sure, the Sultan had entrusted his son to the care of his old and tried friend Elfi Bey; and had endured two-and-twenty years of painful waiting for the day when he should see him once more. All this the Sultan had recounted to his supposed son; expressing himself above measure delighted with his figure and dignified bearing.

On reaching the territories of the aged prince, they were everywhere welcomed with acclamations of joy; for the report of the Prince's return had passed like wild-fire through the towns and villages. On the streets they passed through were arches of leaves and flowers erected; splendid cloths of every hue decorated the houses; and loudly did the people praise God and the Prophet, for having sent them so handsome a prince. All this filled the proud heart of the tailor with rapture; but how unhappy must the real Omar have

felt, who, still in chains and in mute despondency, followed in the train! No one cared for him amid the general rejoicing, though, in fact, he was the true claimant of it all. The name of Omar was echoed by thousands of thousands of tongues, but he who rightly bore it was noticed by no one. Perhaps this or that person would ask who then it was they were bringing with them in fetters, and fearfully sounded his guard's answer in the ears of the Prince—"it is only a crazy tailor."

The procession had at last reached the Sultan's capital, where everything was arranged for their reception on a still more splendid scale than in the other towns. The Sultana, a venerable old lady, was waiting for them with her whole court in the most magnificent saloon of the palace. The floor of this apartment was covered with one immense carpet: the walls hung with sky-blue damask, looped up in large silver rosettes, with tassels and cords of gold.

It was already dark on the arrival of the cavalcade, and a host of round coloured lamps were burning in the saloon, and turning night into day. But they shone brightest and most variedly at the upper end of the hall, where the Sultana was sitting on a throne. This last was raised on four steps, inlaid with gold, and set in amethysts. The four noblest emirs expanded a baldachin of red silk over the Sultana's head, and the Sheik of Medina fanned her with the feathers of the peacock.

In this manner the Sultana awaited her consort and her son. She, too, had not seen him since the day of his birth; but significant dreams had shown her the long wished-for one, till she felt that she could recognise him among thousands. Now the clattering of the approaching cavalcade was heard, with the sound of drum and trumpet mingling with the huzzas of the multitude; the tramp of the horses echoed in the court of the palace—nearer and nearer sounded the steps of the returning ones—the doors of the saloon flew open, and through the rows of prostrate servants hastened the Sultan, leaning on his son's hand, to the throne of his mother.

"Here," said he, "I bring thee him thou hast so long desired!"

But the Sultana abruptly interrupted him. "That is not my son," cried she; "those are not the features which the Prophet has shown me in my dreams!"

Just as the Sultan was about to rebuke her for her superstition, the door of the saloon again flew open; Prince Omar

rushed in, followed close by his guards, from whom he had broken loose by the full exertion of his strength. He cast himself breathless before the throne. "Here will I die," said he. "Let them slay me, cruel father; for this disgrace will I bear no longer!"

All were thrown into consternation at this speech. They crowded round the unfortunate man, and the guards coming up were just on the point of seizing him, and again riveting on his bands, when the Sultana—who in mute amazement had witnessed the whole scene—sprang from her throne. "Stay your hands," cried she; "this one, and no other, is the right one. This is he whom my eyes have never beheld; but whom my heart hath known too well!"

The guards had involuntarily let go Omar; but the Sultan, inflamed with burning fury, called on them to "bind the madman." "*I* have to decide, here," said he, in an imperious tone, "and here judgment is not awarded according to women's dreams, but according to certain unerring signs. This man (pointing to Labucan) is my son; for he brought me the dagger, the pledge of my friend, Elfi!"

"He stole it," cried Omar; "and treacherously abused my confidence!"

But the Sultan turned a deaf ear to his son's voice, for he was accustomed, in every matter, to be obstinately guided by his own opinion; so he had the unhappy Omar dragged, by main force, out of the saloon; while he retired with Labucan to his own apartment, full of rage at the Sultana, his consort, with whom he for five-and-twenty years before had lived in perfect peace.

The Sultana was very sorrowful about all that had happened; she was fully convinced that an imposter had gained the Sultan's heart, for many portentous dreams had shown her the unhappy captive as her son. When her grief had partly subsided, she bethought herself of some means of convincing her consort of his error. This was a difficult task, to be sure; for the man who gave himself out as their son had delivered the dagger—the pledge of recognition—and had, as she found out, inveigled Omar into a relation of so much of his previous life, that he was able to play his part without betraying himself. In this strait she summoned the men who had escorted the Sultan to the pillar of El-Serujah, made them tell her exactly all that happened there, and then advised about what she was to do, with some of her most confidential slaves. They hit upon this plan

and that, and then rejected it again; till at last Melechsulah, a cunning old Circassian, said, "If I heard you aright, my honoured mistress, the bearer of the dagger named him whom you hold to be your son, Labucan, a crazy tailor?"

"Yes, such was the case," replied the Sultana; "and what do you see in that?"

"How would it be now," continued the old Circassian, "if this imposter had fastened his own name upon your son? For if that were the case, there is an excellent way of catching him trap, which I will tell you of quite secretly."

The Sultana turned to her slave, and the latter whispered a piece of advice in her ear, which seemed to please her, for she immediately prepared to go to the Sultan.

She was a shrewd woman, well aware of the Sultan's weak side, and clever in making the best of it. So she pretended to be inclined to let him have his way, and to acknowledge Labucan as her son, begging only the reserve of one condition; the Sultan, who was really sorry for his passionate conduct towards his wife, granted her this. She then said, "I should very much like to put them both to a proof of their skill. Any one else would perhaps make them ride, fight, or throw the javelin; but such things as those every one can do. No! I will give them a task that requires a person to be sharp. The truth is, each of them shall make a caftan and a pair of trowsers, and then we shall just see who makes the finest."

At this the Sultan laughed, and said, "Well, upon my word; a pretty scheme you've hit upon. What! my son try with your crazy tailor, who can make the best caftan? No, no; that won't do."

The Sultana, however, reminded him that he had granted her the condition beforehand; and, as he was a man of his word, he at last gave in. Though he swore that even if the crazy tailor made ever so fine a caftan, he could not think of recognising him as son for all that.

In consequence of all this the Sultan went to his son himself, and entreated him to side with his mother's whim; for she was quite bent upon seeing a caftan of his workmanship. Good Labucan's heart overflowed with joy. "If that's all," thought he, "the Lady Sultana shall soon be pleased with me."

Now two rooms had been prepared for the match, one for the Prince, and the other for the tailor: in these they were to try their skill; and each had been furnished with a sufficient piece of silk, a pair of scissors, and a needle and thread.

The Sultan was very curious to see what sort of a caftan his son would bring to light; and the Sultana's heart beat anxiously —for was her artifice to succeed or not? Two days had been allotted to each for his work. In the third day the Sultan sent for his consort; and when she came, he sent to the rooms for the caftans and the two workers. Labucan entered with a look of triumph, and spread out his caftan before the astonished gaze of the Sultan. "Look, father," said he; "look, my honoured mother, isnot this a masterpiece of a caftan? I will lay a wager with the first tailor to the court that he does not turn out such another."

The Sultana smiled, and turned to Omar: "and what hast thou managed to make, my son," said she?

In indignation the latter threw the silk and the scissors on the ground. "I have been taught to curb the horse and wield the sabre, and my javelin hits its mark at sixty paces; but the art of the needle is strange to me, and unworthy too would it be of a ward of Elfi Bey's, the ruler of Cairo"

"Oh thou, the true son of my lord," cried the Sultana. "Ah! if I could but embrace thee, and really name thee son! Forgive me, my lord and husband, for having employed this artifice; don't you yet see who is prince and who is tailor? Of a truth it is a splendid caftan that your son has made, and I feel quite tempted to ask him with what master he served his time."

In the mean while the Sultan had been sitting immersed in thought, gazing now on his wife and now on Labucan, who vainly strove to hide his blushes and his confusion at having so stupidly betrayed himself. "But even this is not a sufficient proof," said he; "yet I know, thank Allah, a way of finding out whether I have been cheated or not."

To this end, he ordered his fleetest horse to be brought, mounted in a moment, and rode into a wood that lay not far from the city. There, it was said of old, lived a kind fairy, Adolzada by name, who had often aided the princes of his house with her advice in the hour of need. To her, therefore, the Sultan hastened.

In the centre of the wood there was an open spot, surrounded by lofty cedars. Here, it was said, the fairy lived; and seldom was it trodden by mortal foot, for a certain shyness of the place had for long ages been transmitted from father to son. On arriving at this spot, the Sultan dismounted, tied his horse to a tree, took his stand in the centre of the area, and said in a loud voice: "If it be true that thou hast given my fathers good

counsel in the hour of need, disdain not the prayer of their son, and advise me in a case where human wisdom is behind."

Scarcely had he given utterance to the last words, when one of the cedar-trees opened; and a veiled lady, in long white garments, stepped forth.

"I know why thou comest to me, Sultan Sadud. Thy design is honest; and so thou shalt have my help. Take these two little boxes. Let those two who claim to be thy sons each make his choice of one of them. I know that the true claimant will not miss the right one." So said the veiled lady; and handed him two little boxes of ivory, richly set in gold and pearls. On their lids, which the Sultan in vain sought to lift, were two inscriptions inlaid in diamonds.

The Sultan, on his ride home, thought what could be in the boxes, which with all his strength he could not open. The inscriptions, too, threw no light on the matter; for the one was "Honour and Fame," the other "Fortune and Riches." He thought to himself he would have a hard matter to choose between the two, which seemed equally attractive and equally alluring.

When he reached his palace again, he sent for the Sultana, and told her the fairy's answer; and this filled her with the hope that he towards whom her heart so yearned would choose the box that would prove his kingly descent.

Two tables were placed before the Sultan's throne. With his own hand he placed the two boxes on them, and signed to one of his slaves to open the door of the saloon. A splendid assembly of the bashas and emirs of the kingdom, whom the Sultan had summoned together, streamed through the open portal. They took their seats on costly cushions that were ranged along the walls.

When all were seated, the King winked a second time, and Labucan was brought in. With a proud step he strode through the saloon, and cast himself down before the throne: "What willeth my lord and father?"

The Sultan rose from his throne. "My son," said he, "there are doubts of the genuineness of thy claim to this name. One of those boxes contains the confirmation of thy genuine descendancy. Choose one of them. I doubt not thou wilt select the right one."

Labucan rose, and stood before the boxes. He was a long time considering which he should choose. At last he said, "Honoured father! what greater fortune can there be than the

being thy son? what nobler guerdon than the riches of thy favour? I choose the box with the inscription "Fortune and Riches."

"We shall know presently whether thou hast chosen right or not. For the present, take thy seat by the Basha of Medina," said the Sultan; and signed to the slaves.

Omar was led in. His look was gloomy. His mother was sorrowful; and his appearance excited an unusual sympathy among those present. He cast himself down before the throne, and inquired the will of the Sultan.

The Sultan explained to him that he had to make choice of one of the boxes. He rose, and went to the table.

With an attentive eye he scanned both the inscriptions: and at length he spoke thus: "The few last days have taught me how uncertain is fortune, how transitory are riches. They have taught me, too, that honour dwells like an imperishable treasure in the breasts of the brave, and that the beaming star of fame passes not away with fortune. And, though I should resign a throne in the choice, yet the die is cast. 'Honour and Fame' be mine."

He placed his hand on the box he had chosen; but the Sultan ordered him to stop, signing to Labucan to step up to his table also. Labucan did so, and laid his hand on his box.

Then the Sultan ordered a basin of water from the holy spring of Zemzen, in Mecca, washed his hands for prayer, turned his face eastward, and throwing himself on the ground, prayed thus: "God of my fathers! thou who for long ages hast preserved our lineage pure and unpolluted, let not an unworthy head bring shame on the name of the Abassis; but extend thy protecting hand over my real son in this hour of trial."

The Sultan rose, and again mounted his throne: all the eagerness of expectation took possession of the courtiers present; they scarcely dared to breathe: the creep of a mouse might have been heard over the floor. The hindermost spectators stood on tiptoe, and stretched forward to peep at the boxes over the heads of those before them.

The Sultan proclaimed—"Open the boxes;" and though no strength could move the lids before, they now flew open in an instant.

In the box which Omar had chosen, on a velvet cushion, lay a little golden crown and a sceptre. In Labucan's box, a large needle and a little thread. The Sultan ordered them both to bring their boxes before the throne: he took the little coronet up off

the cushion, and a wonderful sight it was. As he held it, it grew larger and larger, till it was of the size of a proper crown. He put it on the head of his son Omar—who was kneeling before him—kissed his forehead, and bid him take his place by his side; but turning to Labucan, he said, "There is an old saying—'Let not the cobler go beyond his last:' it seems as if thou wert not to go beyond the needle! To be sure, thou deservest not my mercy; but one has entreated for thee whom to-day I can deny in nothing; so I grant thee thy sorry life; but if my advice be worth taking, thou wilt make haste out of my kingdom."

Shame-stricken, undone as he was, the poor journeyman could not answer a word. He cast himself at the Prince's feet, and the tears gushed from his eyes. "Canst thou forgive me, Prince?" said he.

"To be true to their friends and generous to their enemies is the pride of the Abassi," replied the Prince, raising him: "depart in peace."

"O, thou true son of my fathers," cried the old Sultan, in deep emotion, and sank on Omar's breast.

The emirs and bashas, and all the grandees of the realm, rose from their seats, and hailed the new Prince with shouts of triumph; while, amidst the general acclamations, Labucan took his box under his arm, and stole out of the room.

He went down to the Sultan's stables, saddled and bridled his horse Marva, and rode out of the gate towards Alexandria. His whole life as prince seemed a dream to him; and the costly box alone, set in pearls and diamonds, reminded him that really he had not been dreaming.

When he at length reached Alexandria, he rode up to his old master's house, alighted from his horse, tied him up at the door, and stepped into the workshop. The master tailor, who at first did not know him, made a great ado, and asked him what were his commands; but on eyeing his guest more narrowly, and recognising his old Labucan, he called his journeymen and apprentices. They all fell furiously on the poor fellow, who little expected such a reception, pinched him, and thrashed him with irons and yard measures; pricked him with their needles, and pinched him with sharp scissors, till he sank down exhausted on a heap of old clothes. Whilst he lay in this position, his master gave him a rating about the stolen robe. In vain did Labucan assure him that he had only come back to make amends for everything—in vain did he offer him a three-

fold compensation for the mischief done; his master and workmen only fell on him once more, beat him black and blue, and then kicked him out of doors. Full of bruises, and all in rags, he mounted his horse Marva, and rode to a caravansary. There he laid down to rest, and began to meditate on what was past; his ambition—his deceit—its detection, and his merited punishment. He bewailed his folly, and sincerely repented of his errors. He resolved henceforth to renounce all thoughts of greatness, and to become an honest burgher.

And the next day he was not sorry for his resolve; for the hard blows of his master and his men seemed to have thumped all grandeur out of him. He sold his little box at a very high price to a jeweller, bought a house, and made a workshop for his handicraft. When he had got everything to rights, and had hung out a board over his window, with the words—"Labucan, Tailor," upon it, he sat himself down, and began with the needle and thread that he found on the box, to mend the coat which his master had so cruelly tattered. He happened to be suddenly called away from his work, and when he was about to set too again, what a strange sight surprised him! The needle sewed industriously on without being handled by anybody, and made such fine, neat stitches, as he in his cleverest moments had never made. Of a truth, the smallest present from the hands of a kind fairy is of immense value; but this gift had another virtue besides: the needle might be as industrious as it liked, yet the little piece of thread never came to an end.

Labucan gained a great many customers, and was soon the most noted tailor far and wide: he cut out the things himself, put in the first stitch with the needle, and in a trice it set to, and worked on without intermission till the garment was ready. Tailor Labucan soon had the whole town in his custom, for his work was beautiful and very cheap; and there was only one thing that the people of Alexandria shook their heads at, namely, that he employed no journeymen, and always worked with the doors all locked.

Thus the spell-words of the little box, that promised fortune and riches, were fully verified. Fortunes and riches, though moderately given, attended the steps of the now reformed and virtuous tailor, and when he heard of the fame of the good Sultan Omar, whose name was in every body's mouth, when he heard that that brave man was his people's pride, the object of their love, and the terror of his enemies, the quondam prince thought to himself, "It is much better though that I've remained a tailor, for

there's something very dangerous about that same fame and honour. So he lived, contented with his position, and respected by his fellow townsmen; and if nothing has since happened to damp the vigour of the needle, it may be seen sewing away still with the endless thread of the kind fairy Adolzaida.

At sunset the caravan set out again, and soon arrived at Borkel El Had, or the Pilgrim's Well, from which place they had only three hours' journey to Cairo. They were expected about this time, and the merchants had soon the delight of seeing their friends in Cairo coming to meet them. They entered the city by the gate of Babel Faleh, for it is thought to augur well if arrivals from Mecca first pass through the gate by which the Prophet entered.

In the market-place the four Turkish merchants took leave of the stranger and the Greek Zaleucus, and went with their friends to their homes. But Zaleucus showed the stranger a good caravansary, and invited him to take his noon-day repast with him; the stranger consented, and promised to appear as soon as he had arranged his dress.

The Greek in the meanwhile made every arrangement for the good entertainment of a stranger whom he had become attached to on the journey, and as soon as the meats and drinks were served in proper order, he took his seat and awaited his guest.

With a slow and heavy tread he heard him coming up the passage that led to his apartment; he kindly rose to meet him, and to welcome him on the threshold; but with what horror did he start back when the door opened, and that terrible red cloak placed himself before him: he cast one look more at him; it was no illusion; the high commanding figure, the mask from which the black eyes flashed on him, the red mantle with the golden embroidery, were all too familiar memorials to him of the most dreadful hours of his life.

Conflicting feelings boiled in Zaleucus' breast; he had long made his peace with this well-remembered form, and cordially forgiven him, but his re-appearance opened all his wounds anew; all those torturing hours, fraught with the fear of death—that pining regret which embittered his best days, passed in quick review before his spirit.

"What wantest thou, terrible one?" cried he, while the

apparition stood motionless on the threshold. "Begone, ere I curse thee!"

"Zaleucus!" said a well-known voice from beneath the mask. "Zaleucus, is it thus thou receivest thy guest?" The speaker doffed his mask, threw back his cloak; it was Selim, the stranger.

But even then Zaleucus did not seem pacified; he shuddered at the sight of the stranger, for clearly did he recognise in him the unknown one of the Ponte Vecchio. The habitual feelings of hospitality, however, prevailed; he signed in silence to his guest to be seated at the table.

"I guess thy thoughts," began the latter, when they both had sat down; "thy eyes look questioningly at me. I might have been silent, and never have presented myself to thee again; but I have much to account to thee for, and thus, even at the risk of being cursed by thee, have I dared to appear under my own form. Thou once saidst, 'The faith of my fathers commands me to love him, and perhaps after all he is unhappier than I.' Believe me that I am so, my friend, and listen to my vindication of myself."

"I must go back to far-gone times in order to make myself understood. I was born in Alexandria, of Christian parents. My father, the younger son of an old French family of distinction, was consul at Alexandria. I was brought up from the age of twelve in France, at the house of a brother of my mother's, and did not leave my native country till several years after the outbreak of the revolution; when, with my uncle, who felt himself no longer safe in the land of his ancestors, I sought a refuge across the sea under my parents' roof. We landed in the full hope of finding in my parental dwelling that peace and quiet which the infuriate people of France had deprived us of. But alas! everything in my father's house was not as it should be; the tempests of this excited period had not as yet reached it from without, but all the more unexpectedly had misfortune sapped its inmost core. My brother, a hopeful, promising young man, had a short time before married the youthful daughter of a Florentine nobleman, who lived in our neighbourhood: just two days previous to our arrival she had suddenly disappeared, without either our family or her father being able to discover the least trace of her resort; till we at last came to the conclusion that she had ventured too far out of bounds, and had fallen into the hands of banditti. For my poor brother this conjecture was almost more consolatory than

the sad truth which but too soon discovered itself. The faithless one had shipped herself off in the company of a young Neapolitan, with whom she had become acquainted at her father's. My brother, beyond measure exasperated at this step, strained every nerve to bring punishment on the guilty one; but all in vain. His attempts, which had caused a stir in Naples and Florence, only served to consummate our troubles. The Florentine nobleman returned to his country, ostensibly to vindicate my brother's rights, but in real fact to work our ruin. He put a stop to every inquiry in Florence which my brother had set on foot, and managed so well to avail himself of the various influences which he had acquired, that my father and brother were made objects of suspicion to the government, were arrested in the basest manner, conducted into France, and there despatched by the axe of the executioner. My poor mother went out of her mind, nor till after ten long months of suffering did death release her from that fearful state. For the last few days, however, of her existence she had regained her consciousness. So I was left all alone in the world; yet one only thought took possession of my soul; one thought only made me forget my sorrows; it was that burning flame which my dying mother had kindled in me.

"In her latter hours, as I said before, her consciousness had returned. She summoned me to her, and spoke with composure of our destiny and her approaching end. But soon she sent every one else from the room, rose up solemnly in her wretched bed, and said I should have her blessing if I would swear to execute a commission she would intrust me with. Deeply moved by the words of a dying mother, I vowed with an oath to do what she bade me. She then broke forth in curses on the Florentinian and his daughter, and charged me, on the most fearful menace of her curse, to avenge on him my unhappy house. She died in my arms. That thought of revenge had long been slumbering in my soul; now it woke in full energy to life. I gathered up the relics of my paternal property, and swore to hazard all for revenge, or to perish.

"I was soon at Florence, where I lived as retired as possible. The difficulties of my plot were aggravated by the position in which my enemies were then placed; the old Florentinian had risen to be governor, and thus had every means of ruining me at his disposal the moment he got the least wind of my intent. Accident favoured me; one evening I saw a man threading the streets in a livery that was familiar to me; his tollering step, his

gloomy look, and the only half-suppressed *santo sacramento* and *maladetto diavalo* told me it was old Pedro, one of the Florentinian's servants whom I had known in Alexandria. I made no doubt he was in a passion with his master, and I resolved to make the best of his humour. He seemed very much surprised to see me there; he told me all his grievances, saying that since his master had been governor he could do nothing to please him. And at last my gold, backed by his own passion, gained him over to my side. The difficulty was now surmounted; I had a man in my pay, who, at any hour, opened to me my enemy's door, and thus my plan of vengeance grew more rapidly ripe. The life of the old Florentinian seemed to me too light when balanced with the destruction of my family. What he held dearest he must behold a murdered corpse; and this was Bianca, his daughter. Had she not so infamously and so outrageously sinned against my brother, and was she not the prime cause of our misfortunes? How genial to my heart, as it thirsted for revenge, was the news that just then Bianca was to wed for the second time! Our resolve was taken; she must die. But I shuddered at the thought of the deed, and I did not give Pedro credit for resolution enough; so we looked about for a man who should dispatch the business. Among the Florentinians I dare hire no one, for not a soul would have undertaken anything of the sort against the Governor. In this embarrassment the plan which I afterwards put in execution occurred to Pedro, and at the same moment he proposed you, being a foreigner and a physician, as our fittest instrument. The upshot of all you know. Hence the adventure of the mantle."

"Pedro opened us the little door in the Governor's palace, and he would have led us out again just as privily had we not fled away, scared by the ghastly sight which we saw through the cleft of the door.

"Driven onward by terror and remorse, I ran more than two hundred yards, and then sank down exhausted on the steps of a church. Not till then did I become collected again, when my first thought was you, and your terrible fate if you were caught in the house."

"I stole to the palace, but neither of Pedro nor of you could I discover a trace. The little door, however, was open; and so I might at least hope that you had availed yourself of the opportunity of escape."

"At day-break the fear of discovery, and an irresistible sense

of remorse, allowed me to tarry no longer within the walls of Florence: I hastened to Rome. But imagine my confusion, when there even; in a few days, the event became the talk of the place, accompanied by the report that a Greek physician had been apprehended as the murderer. I returned in anxious fear to Florence; and if my thirst for vengeance seemed before this too intense, I cursed it now, for satisfaction was too dearly purchased with thy life. I arrived on the very day which deprived you of your hand. I will not attempt to describe what I felt when I saw you ascend the scaffold, and suffer so heroically. But, then, when your blood gushed forth in streams, my resolve was fixed to endeavour to sweeten the remainder of your life. The sequel you know yourself; it only remains for me to say why I took this journey with you. The thought that you had not yet forgiven me, was burdensomely oppressive to me; so I resolved to pass a series of days with you, and at last to account to you for what I had done."

The Greek had listened to his guest in silence; with a gentle look he offered him his right hand when he had finished.

"I felt too well," said he, "that you must be unhappier than I; for that cruel deed (which I trust you will live to repent of) must eternally hover like a dark cloud over your days. I forgive you, from my heart (may Heaven also be merciful to you!); but permit me one question more. What are you doing under this form here in the desert? What did you set about, after buying me the house in Constantinople?"

"I went back to Alexandria," replied the stranger. "A hatred of all mankind was raging in my breast; a burning hatred most of all of those nations which are termed polished. Take my word for it, I was happier among my Moslemites; and I had been only a few months in Alexandria, when that landing of my countrymen ensued. I saw in them the butchers of my father and my brother only; so I mustered a number of congenial young people of my acquaintance, and joined those brave Mamelukes who were so often the terror of the French army. When the campaign was over, I could not make up my mind to merge again into the arts of peace. With my little band of similarly disposed adherents, I lived a roving, changeful life, devoted to hunting and to war. Among these people I still live. They honour me as their prince; for if my Asiatics are not so polished as your Europeans, they are at least far removed from envy and calumny, from selfishness and covetousness."

Zaleucus thanked the stranger for his recital; but he did not conceal from him his opinion, that it would become his rank and endowments better to live and be useful in the Christian countries of Europe. He grasped his hand, and begged him to journey with him, and with him to live and to die.

His guest looked at him with emotion—"This tells me," said he, "that you quite forgive me, that you love me. Accept my inmost thanks for this." He sprang from his seat, and stood in the full grandeur of his height before the Greek, who almost quailed before the martial grace, the darkly flashing eye, the deep mysterious voice of his guest. "Your proposal is a fine one," said the latter; "for any one else it might be full of charms—I cannot embrace it—at least, not now. My horse is already saddled; my servants are waiting me. Farewell, Zaleucus!"

The strangers, who had been so singularly drawn together, took leave with warm embraces.

"And what am I to call thee? what is the name of the guest who will ever live vividly in my memory?" said the Greek.

The stranger gazed long and silently at him, then pressed his hand once more, and said—"They call me the Lord of the Desert—I AM THE ROBBER, ORBUSAN!"

THE COLD HEART.

No traveller through Suabia should neglect to visit the Black Forest, enclosing as it does, within its vast circumference, all that is grand and solemn, as well as much that is graceful and soothing, in the beauties of woodland scenery. One may travel through it for miles, in some parts, and meet no trace of human habitation; on all sides stand the gigantic pines, clothed in continual shadow, the slanting sunbeams but dimly revealing the untrodden recesses of the forest, while a strange stillness awes the bewildered traveller.

In other parts, following the winding of some forest rill, the wanderer will light on quiet homesteads, situated in spots of most rare and exquisite beauty, where the wood has been partially cleared away, and a little colony established in the very heart of the forest. How peaceful is the scene! Surely no life can vie with a forest one!

The inhabitants of the Schwarzwald are a singular race, differing to a surprising degree from any other people; they are taller and stronger than the generality of men; broad-shouldered and stout-limbed, it would seem that the invigorating odours, which the pines exhale in the early morning, had given to those who dwell beneath their branches a freer respiration, a clearer sight, and a firmer, albeit a less refined, mind, than are possessed by the inhabitants of the valleys and plains. But it is not in their growth or bearing that they materially differ from those who dwell without the forest; it is the singularity of their manners and customs which most attracts the attention and excites the astonishment of a stranger. They dress themselves with

great care; the men allow the beard to grow, as nature intended it should, around the chin; their black jerkins, neatly plaited pantaloons, red stockings, and broad-brimmed pointed hats, give them a quaint, but respectable appearance. The ordinary occupation of this people is glass-making; but they also make watches, which have a very extensive sale.

Such are the inhabitants of one side of the forest: the people who dwell on the other are a portion of the same race; but their occupations have introduced among them habits very different from those of the quiet glass-makers: they trade with their timber, they fell their pines, and float them through the Nagold into the Neckar, and from the upper Neckar down the Rhine, into Holland; and the Black Foresters, with their long rafts, are well known on the Dutch coast. They stop at every town which lies on the banks of these rivers, and endeavour to procure a sale for the more insignificant portion of their cargo, reserving their longest and stoutest planks for the Dutch merchants, who pay large sums of money for them. These foresters are accustomed to a wild, wandering life; they like nothing better than to float down the river on their rafts: they have no greater sorrow than being compelled to return home by land. Their dress differs greatly from that of the glass-makers: they wear jackets of coloured linen, broad green straps over their gigantic shoulders, and short black leather trowsers, from the deep pockets of which peeps forth a brass ruler, the honourable badge of their office: their principal pride, however, is in their boots, which are probably the largest of their kind in the world, for they can be drawn far above the knee; and the material of which they are composed being untanned ox-hide, the "floaters" can walk three feet deep in the water without wetting themselves.

Every community has some traditions peculiar to itself, which are carefully remembered and fondly cherished. However much this may be the case elsewhere, it is pre-eminently so in the Black Forest, where every stock and stone has a wild fiction attached to it, to which the people cling with reverent affection.

The supernatural beings who haunt the different portions of the forest accommodate themselves to the respective ideas of the inhabitants, whom we have just described; so that the tiny spirit of the glass-makers never shows himself otherwise attired than in a black doublet, pantaloons, and pointed hat; whilst Dutch Michael, the representative of the raft-men, is described as a gigantic fellow, in the dress of a floater; so gigantic, in-

deed, that it is a common saying among the Black Foresters, that they would not like to pay for the numerous calves whose skins would be required to make one of his enormous boots!

A very singular adventure once befell a young forester with these wood spirits, the truth of which has never been doubted in his native shades, and which I am now going to relate.

In the glass-makers' portion of the Black Forest lived, many years ago, a poor charcoal burner, who, dying, left his widow, Barbara Munk, to bring up their only son to the business he had himself followed. Young Peter Munk, an intelligent lad, permitted his parents thus to dispose of his fate in life, for it never entered into his head to do what his father had not done before him; he was therefore content to sit week after week over his smoking kiln, or to carry his charcoal to the neighbouring villages for sale. But a charcoal-burner has much time for reflection; and Peter's hut being even more isolated than those of his companions in trade, he had rarely any one to whom he could speak; and this solitude and silence naturally induced him to think early and late. But of what were his thoughts? Did the mighty forest around him, the fantastically shaped rocks, the awful roar of descending cataracts, inspire him with solemn dread of the Almighty Being, whose work they were? Did the flowery sward at his feet, the fragant exhalations of the pines, the soft rippling of the rivulet, and the sweet-toned voices of the forest birds, teach him the *love*, as well as the *power*, of the Creator? Or perhaps the youth's spirit was imbued with poetry—the poetry of feeling? Perhaps he heard awful voices in the thunder-storm, and friendly whisperings in the passing breeze? Perhaps he pictured angelic forms in the clouds of heaven, or peopled the wild-wood with guardian spirits? He might have done so, and it had been a pleasant fancy, tending to better things; but it was not so—Peter's thoughts centred in *himself;* his devotion was not aroused by the beauties of nature, nor was his intellect awakened, nor his fancy excited; selfish thoughts, discontented thoughts, complaining thoughts, filled his breast, and to them he gave utterance as he went slowly to his work in the dewy mornings, or came wearily home in the balmy twilight.

Something weighed on his mind, something vexed, something affected him—*what* he could not rightly tell. At last, he discovered the cause of his uneasiness—his station in life. "A solitary soot-begrimed charcoal burner," said he to himself: "it

is a wretched trade to follow! What respectable people the glass makers, the watchmakers, even the musicians are! And might not I be even as they? am I not a fine, quick lad, and when well washed and dressed in my holiday suit, have I not been often taken for something better than a poor charcoal burner?"

The raft-men on the other side of the forest were especially objects of his envy. When these wood giants visited the glass makers, dressed very smartly, and carrying half-a-hundred weight of silver about them in the shape of buttons, buckles, and chains; when they placed themselves in a haughty position to watch the dance; when they sware Dutch oaths, and smoked out of long Cologne pipes, then Peter saw his visions of happiness embodied in the person of a raft-man.

O foolish Peter! is this the lot you would choose? opulence were dearly purchased, at the expense of all right-mindedness, generous feeling, and youthful simplicity!

But we must not anticipate. Peter particularly envied three of these floaters, they seemed to him the favourites of fortune. One was a very tall, fine man, with a florid complexion, known by the name of Eyekiel the Great. Twice every year he travelled to Amsterdam, with timber, and made such excellent bargains with the Dutch shipwrights, that, whilst his companions plodded homeward on foot, he could afford to ride back in state. The second was a very thin person, nick-named the Long Schlurker; and Peter's envy of this individual was principally occasioned by the extraordinary boldness of speech with which he had been gifted; his conversation was composed of positive assertions, flat contradictions, and impertinent sneers; his wealth, however, blinded the foolish Peter to his defects. The third object of his admiring envy was a handsome youth, distinguished by his elegance, and known in consequence by the appellation of the King of the Dance; he had been a servant to a "timber lord," and had suddenly become immensely rich; some said he had found a pot of gold under a pine tree, others, that he had fished up a portion of the Nibelungen treasure, which lies in the deep bed of the Rhine; in short, the King of the Dance had become rich, no one knew how, and was considered by all a very prince. Peter thought much and often of these three men, as he sat in the solitude of his hut in the pine-wood; yet, in the midst of his admiration and envy, he could not but own to himself that each of them had a grievous fault, unbounded avarice, occasioning inhuman barbarity to the

poor. The Black Foresters are a kind-hearted, charitable people; nevertheless, money stood the timber lords in good stead, and in spite of their heartlessness they did not lack for securing friends.

"I can bear this no longer," said the weary charcoal burner, one day when he was in unusually low spirits, for there had been a feast at the forest hostel the evening before, at which the timber lords had displayed an unwonted degree of arrogance, and an unusual quantity of finery. "I can bear this no longer; O that I were rich as Eyekiel, independent as the Long Schlurker, and gay and good-looking as the King of the Dance! Where can that fellow have found his wealth?" Then the foolish lad set his brains to work to discover a means of becoming rich, but all in vain. Just at this moment a gust of wind swept through the woods, and its fitful sighing round his solitary hut brought to mind many wild stories, many supernatural tales; Peter's thoughts were in a short time absorbed by them, and his cause for discontent forgotten, when, among other traditions of the forest, he remembered one, which seemed sent as an answer to his fretful questions—"How can I obtain riches?" His heart leapt for joy as he wondered how he could so long have forgotten the tale of some of his own sooty ancestors' good luck with the Wood Spirits! "I used to know, too, an invocation to the little Glass-man, our good guardian spirit; let us try—

> 'O! Treasure-keeper, in pine-wood green
> For many a rolling year,
> Lord of the shadowy forest scene—'"

But not a word more could he remember; it was in vain he strained his memory; the invocation still wanted a line of its completion. He often debated whether it would be worth his while to ask some knowing old person to tell him the conclusion of the verse, but he could not make up his mind to reveal the subject of his cogitations; and he thought, too, that the rhyme could not be well known, or surely some of the numerous poor people in the forest would have tried their fortunes with the benevolent Wood Spirit. At last he questioned his mother on the subject. She could not tell him anything about the invocation; but, after some hesitation, she informed him that it was only to those foresters who were born between the hours of twelve and two, on Sunday, that the Wood Spirit deigned to appear. "You, my son," she added, "were born at the Sab-

bath noontide." When Peter heard this his joy was unbounded, and he was eager to try his fortune. He thought the three first lines of the invocation would be sufficient to ensure the spirit's appearance.

A few days afterwards, therefore, he put on his Sunday suit, and telling his mother he had business with a recruiting sergeant in the next town, he set off. Peter, however, instead of taking the road to the town, bent his steps to the pine-knoll, in the centre of the forest, the favourite haunt of the Treasure-keeper. It was situated at the distance of two hours' hard walk from any hut; the foresters not daring to encroach on the spirit's demesne. The pines in this part of the forest were magnificent; the superstition of the people guarded them from the stroke of the axe, and the thick branches, growing in unchecked luxuriance, quite obscured the light of day. Peter Munk shuddered involuntarily as he entered these untrodden recesses of the dark pine-wood; no sound awoke the slumbering echo but his own foot-fall: the very birds had forsaken the haunt of the spirit. Peter soon reached the summit of the knoll, and stood before a pine of such gigantic dimensions, that a Dutch shipwright would have paid some hundred dollars for it on the spot. "Here," thought Peter, "dwells the Treasure-keeper;" whereupon he took off his Sunday hat, and making a profound bow to the tree, cleared his voice, and said timidly, "Good evening, Mr. Glass-man." But no answer was returned; all was still and silent as the grave. "Perhaps I ought to repeat the verse," thought he, and accordingly he began:—

> "O! Treasure-keeper, in pine-wood green
> For many a rolling year,
> Lord of the shadowy woodland scene—"

The words were scarcely out of his mouth when he saw, to his great astonishment, a small, but strange looking figure, peeping at him through the bushes; he immediately imagined himself in the presence of the Treasure-keeper, and even fancied that he recognized his black doublet, red stockings, and little hat, and that he could distinctly perceive the outline of his pale and delicate, yet intelligent features. But the figure vanished as quickly as it had appeared.

"Mr. Glass-man," cried Peter Munk, after a little hesitation, "be so good as not to take me for a fool; if you think that I have not seen you, Mr. Glass-man, you are very much mistaken;

I saw you peeping at me from behind the trees." But he received no answer, except a sound of smothered laughter in the underwood.

At last Peter's patience was exhausted, and he flew into a great passion.

"Just wait a minute, you good-for-nothing little fellow," said he, "I will soon catch you." So saying, he sprang with one bound behind the pine-trees, but he found no Treasure-keeper there—only a poor, delicate little squirrel, jumping about on the green sward.

Peter Munk shook his head in silent perplexity; he knew that the invocation wanted a line of its completion, and he imagined this the cause of the Glass-man's non-appearance. In vain he racked his brain to remember that line, that unfortunate line! The squirrel peeped at him between the tangled branches of the pines, and seemed as though it were mocking at him, or, at least, making itself merry at his expense. The little creature played such extraordinary tricks, and looked so cunningly at him, that at last he became afraid of it, and wished himself any where else than alone with it in the pine-wood; he therefore retreated hastily from the knoll, but he had a long distance to go, and the shadows of approaching evening were added to the gloom that continually prevails in these desolate regions.

Full of wonder and awe, the young man pursued his way through the untrodden depths of the forest; and right glad was he when the majestic but oppressive stillness was broken by the sound of the dogs barking, and when a blue wreath of smoke, curling above the trees, announced that he was again approaching the dwellings of man. As he drew nearer, he remarked, with surprise, that the huts before him differed greatly in appearance from those of his native village, and he perceived that he had, in his fear and agitation, mistaken his road, and crossed the forest to the abodes of the raft-men.

The inhabitants of the cottage received Peter kindly, and forbore to question him respecting his name, abode, or object in quitting his home, but gave him apple-wine to drink, and invited him to share their evening meal—a wild hen. The family consisted of a woodman, his wife, and eleven children, and an aged man, the woodman's father.

After the meal, the hostess and her daughters plied their distaffs by the help of a light, which the youths fed with resin from the pines; the grandfather and father smoked, and looked at their children; the lads were busy cutting up pieces of wood,

and shaping them into forks and spoons. The storm howled without, and the branches of the pines creaked in the wind; crashing blows were occasionally heard, and, after a while, a sound as of a tree falling heavily. The rash youths were extremely anxious to run out into the wood to see what was going on, but the aged grandfather entreated them to refrain.

"I counsel you not to leave the house," he cried: "you will never return, for to-night Dutch Michael builds himself a new raft."

The young people looked inquiringly at him; though they had, doubtless, often before heard of Dutch Michael, still they asked their grandfather to tell them about him. Peter Munk, who had never heard any particulars of the wood demon's history, joined in their request.

The old man began: "He is the lord of these woods, and I will now relate to you all that I know respecting him. For many hundred years the Black Foresters bore the character of the best of men; their poverty, their economy, their temperance, were renowned; but since the rapid increase of wealth within the precincts of the forest, much that is good and praiseworthy has departed; the lads dance and drink on Sunday; they even swear, which is a disgrace and shame to the whole people: formerly, things were very different, and I cannot but fear that all these bad habits originated with Dutch Michael. Some hundred years ago lived a rich timber lord; he had many men in his employ, and extended his trade far down the Rhine; a blessing rested upon his business, for he was a pious man. One evening a stranger stopped at the door of his house; he was dressed after the fashion of the Black Foresters, but was very unlike them in his appearance; he was so tall that the timber merchant had some difficulty in believing so monstrous a being could be a mere mortal. The gigantic stranger asked for work; and as the merchant thought he looked an industrious fellow, and certainly was a very strong one, he engaged him. Never had a timber lord such a servant as Michael proved to be. He could fell a tree alone in the time usually required by three men; and while six foresters laboured to lift one end of a pine from the ground, he without difficulty placed the other on his shoulder. When he had worked thus for six months, he went to his master and asked permission to go down into Holland with the floaters, which life he liked better than tree-felling.

"'Well, Michael,' said his master, 'you are so good a servant, that I should be sorry to stand in the way of your seeing

a little of the world, if your taste lies that way; and I do not doubt but that you will make yourself as useful on the rafts as you have been in the woods; at any rate, you can go for once.'

"So Michael became a raft-man, and astonished his comrades not a little by his exploits. When the raft on which he was to embark was ready, Michael made his appearance with another; it was built of eight enormous planks, which he carried on his shoulder as if they had been oars—whence they came no one knew. The timber merchant did not care to ask, but he reckoned up the dollars they would bring him, and rejoiced in his heart.

"Michael took it very quietly. 'They are to build me a float,' said he. 'Do you think I could go in that gimcrack thing? why! my weight would sink it at once.'

"His master offered him a handsome pair of floater's boots, as a proof of his gratitude for his services; Michael despised them, and produced a pair for his use, the like of which had never been seen before; my grandfather has assured me that they weighed a hundred pounds, and were five feet long! The floats started, and if Michael had astonished the wood-cutters, much more did he astonish the raft-men; for instead of his raft proceeding more tediously than the other, which every one conjectured it would do, on account of its superior bulk, it absolutely flew over the rippling waters of the Neckar. Whilst it was advancing at this rate, the river made a sudden bend, and the raft-men in vain exerted all their strength to keep the float from running aground. In this dilemma, Michael jumped into the water, and with one effort guided it aright, so that the danger was averted; and when a convenient spot was found, he seized his immense oar, stuck it in the ground, and with another prodigious effort drove the raft off the shore with such violence that they flew like lightning past towns and villages, and were far down the river in a moment; so that in half the time usually occupied by the voyage, the astonished floaters had accomplished it, and found themselves at Cologne.

"Then Michael said, 'Comrades, you are right good merchants; but take my advice: I am sure that the men who buy your timber here, sell it again for a much higher price in Holland. Let us only sell our small beams here, and go on to Rotterdam; and surely all we gain for the planks, above the customary price, will fairly belong to us.'

"So spake the cunning Michael, and his comrades were content; some because they wished to see Holland, others because

they coveted the gold; only one man remained uncorrupted by Michael's specious arguments, and could not be won from his master's interest to appropriate any portion of his gains to himself. His comrades heard, laughed at, and forgot his expostulations. Dutch Michael did not forget them. So they passed down the Rhine. Michael guided the raft, and soon brought it to Rotterdam; here they sold the timber for four times the usual price, and Michael's raft was disposed of for many hundreds of dollars. When the Black Foresters saw the money, they were beside themselves with joy; Michael shared the profit among his companions, reserving only a fourth for his master. Then they went to a public house, where they drank and played away their money with the low persons who resorted thither; as for the brave floater who had condemned their evil doings, Michael sold him to a kidnapper, and he has never been heard of since. From that time Holland became a kind of Paradise to the young foresters, and Michael was their king; from that time wealth, vice, drinking, and gaming found favour in the eyes of the once virtuous, frugal, and temperate inhabitants of this forest.

"Time passed on, and Dutch Michael's wicked accomplices paid the debt of nature; he, too, disappeared, but certainly he is not *dead;* for more than a century he has haunted this neighbourhood, and those that seek for him will not seek in vain; he has held intercourse with many now living, and has helped them to become rich—at the risk of their miserable souls however; more I dare not say. But this is certain, that on those nights when the storm howls loudest, and all good people are sunk in peaceful slumber, Dutch Michael fells the finest pines in the forest, and these he gives to the wretched men whom he dooms to destruction; he conveys them to the water edge, and constructing a raft, freights it with them, and guides it down to Holland for his miserable victims. But if I were lord and master there, I would set fire to all the planks and beams Dutch Michael brought into my country, for no ship built with them ever yet reached land. This is the reason why shipwrecks are so numerous; why else should a beautiful, strong, well-built vessel sink in the finest weather, or run aground on the clearest moonlight nights? But for every pine that Dutch Michael hews down in the Black Forest, some one of his old planks starts from its place in the ship, lets in the water, and down goes the stately vessel, with all her crew, into the deep ocean. This is the legend of Dutch Michael; and thus you see how all

that is evil in the ways of our countrymen originated in him. Oh, he can make rich, but keep me from his riches; for the wealth of empires I would not be Eyekiel the Great, nor the Long Schlurker, nor the handsome King of the Dance!"

The storm had subsided during the recital; the maidens quietly lighted their lamps, and went away; the lads placed a sack of leaves for a pillow on the stone bench, and then they too wished Peter good night, and he betook himself to his hard but clean couch.

Peter Munk had never been so disturbed in his sleep as he was this night; sometimes he imagined that he saw the dark-browed, gigantic Michael at the lattice-window, forcing it open, and showering down gold pieces, which fell around the slumberer with a gentle and inviting sound; then the scene would change, and the benevolent little Glass-man rode round the room, upon a great green flask, and his merry laugh rang in Peter's ear; a deep voice would then chaunt in his left ear—

"Gold! Gold!
List to me, ye woodmen bold,
Timber is in Holland sold!
Gold! Gold! Gold!"

Then a sweet-toned delicate voice sounded in his right ear, humming the well-known invocation to the Treasure-keeper, and a low, mocking laugh accompanied the words, "Stupid Peter Munk, stupid Peter Munk cannot find a rhyme to *year*, and yet was born at twelve o'clock on Sunday! Rhyme, stupid Peter, rhyme."

Poor Peter moaned and murmured in his troubled sleep as he tried to make a rhyme, and as he had vainly attempted it when awake, it is not very likely that he should succeed asleep. He awoke up at the dawn of day, and his thoughts were still occupied by his singular dream; he sat himself at the table, laid his bewildered head upon his folded arms, and whilst the laughing voice still echoed in his ear, "Rhyme, stupid Peter, rhyme," he heard steps approaching the house, and three young woodmen passed the window, on their way to their daily work in the wood, one of them singing cheerfully—

"Upon this verdant bank we stood
In shadow of yon dim pine-wood;
For many a long and tedious year
My love and I, we parted here."

Peter listened to the words like one petrified; then recollecting himself, he rushed from the house, and overtaking the young men, seized the singer roughly by the arm: "Stop, stop, friend," he cried, "what rhyme did you make to *year?* Pray be so kind as to tell me?"

"Why, what does it matter to you, fellow? Cannot I sing what I choose without being questioned by you? Let my arm go, sir, or ———."

"I will not until you tell me your song," cried Peter, beside himself with impatience and excitement, and grasping the arm he held still more firmly.

When the two other lads saw what rough treatment he bestowed on their companion, they could restrain themselves no longer, but fell upon Peter, and beat him with all their strength, until he was forced to quit his hold.

"Now you have had enough," they said; "good bye, silly fellow, and when next you want to learn verses, do not assault people on the highway to induce them to instruct you."

"I will not," answered poor Peter, sighing bitterly; "but since you have so punished me for the assault, perhaps you will have the kindness to teach me the verses."

They laughed at him, but complied with his request, and singing the verse again, they left him.

> "For many a long and tedious *year*
> My love and I, we parted *here*,"

repeated poor Peter, smarting under the blows he had received; "well, that is something gained. Now, Mr. Glass-man, we will have a word together!"

He went back to the cottage for his hat and stick, took a friendly farewell of the hospitable family, and bent his steps to the haunted knoll. He went slowly and thoughtfully on his way, for he had to compose a line; at last he found he was approaching the object of his journey by the increased height and thickness of the pines, and as he entered the gloomiest part of the haunted region he jumped for joy, for he had completed the invocation to his great satisfaction. Just at this moment, a gigantic figure dressed as a raft-man, and carrying an oar that was fully the size of a mast, stepped into the path from beneath the pine-trees. Peter Munks's knees smote against each other as the strange figure approached him, for he thought, "This is no other than Dutch Michael."

The stranger was by this time at his side, but had not yet

spoken, and Peter ventured from time to time to cast side-long glances at his companion. He was, as we have before heard, of gigantic stature; his face was no longer young, but could not be called old, although his brow was much wrinkled; he wore a jacket of coloured linen, and enormous boots drawn up over his leathern trowsers; and in his whole appearance Peter recognised the hero of the woodman's tale.

The Forest King at last broke the silence, by saying in a threatening tone, "Peter Munk, what are you doing in the pine wood?"

"Good morning, countryman," answered Peter, trembling all over, but endeavouring to appear composed; "I am returning home this way."

"Peter Munk," retorted his companion with increasing anger, "this is not your way home."

"No, not exactly," said poor Peter; "but the day is so warm, and this path, though longer, is so much more easy, that —"

"Do not tell me a lie, you charcoal burner!" cried Dutch Michael, with a voice of thunder, "or I will fell you to the earth with my oar; know once for all that I saw you paying your court to the Glass-man; come, come," he added more gently, "that was a most foolish step to take, but it was truly fortunate you did not know the verse; he is a very niggard, that little fellow; he gives very little, and that little brings no joy with it. Peter, you are a poor simpleton, and I am very sorry for it; such a fine, handsome, high-spirited lad to be doomed to the life of a charcoal burner! it is a wretched life!"

"So it is," said Peter, "a very wretched life."

"Well," continued Michael, "I do not like to see such a fine fellow in want; you will not be the first to whom I have given a helping hand; come, how much will you have?"

As he said this, he rattled the money in his deep pockets, and the sound attracted Peter in the same inviting manner as it had done in his dream; his heart beat high, and he felt cold and hot in a moment. He thought that Dutch Michael seemed to feel compassion for him, and did not offer the money as if he expected a return; but the mysterious tale of the old man was still fresh in his memory, and in inexpressible terror he answered, "I am much obliged to you, sir, but I do not want your money; I know very well who you are!"

He then took to his heels, and ran as he had never run before; the Wood Demon in two or three strides could have overtaken him, had he wished to do so, but he contented himself

with crying after flying Peter, "Change your mind, change your mind, Peter; you may as well do so now, for I see written on your forehead, and I read in your eyes, that you shall not escape me at last; so do not run so fast, but exchange a friendly word with me; for you are almost beyond the circle of my domain."

When Peter heard this, and saw a narrow ditch before him, hope sprang up in his heart, and he increased his speed, in order to leap across it and escape from Michael's power; for the Forest King now hastened after him with curses and threats. The young man sprang with one bound over the ditch, for he saw the giant's arm raised to hurl his oar at him. The oar fell at a little distance from him, and Dutch Michael retreated with wrathful exclamations.

Relieved from his unwelcome companion, Peter proceeded trembling, but with cheerfulness, on his way, until he reached the great pine.

He made a still more profound bow to the tree than he had done before, and began—

> "O! Treasure-keeper, in pine-wood green
> For many a rolling year,
> Lord of the shadowy forest scene,
> *Show thyself to me here.*"

"You have not got the verse right yet, Peter Munk," said a delicate voice near him, "but, as you were born at the right hour, I will let it pass."

Peter then saw under the pine a very small and aged man, dressed as a glass-maker. He had a thin and pale but benevolent countenance; his white beard was made of spun glass; he smoked out of a little, blue, glass pipe, and as Peter approached nearer to him, he perceived that all his clothes were composed of the same material.

"So you met Dutch Michael on your way hither?" continued the little man; "I am surprised you escaped from him so easily."

"So am I, I can assure you, Mr. Glass-man; but let me thank you for deigning to appear to me, and then tell you the reason of my thus troubling you. The truth is, I am discontented with my trade; I do not like a charcoal burner's life. As I am still very young, I hope to be able to do something better; why should not I be rich as well as Eyekiel, or the King of the Dance, who spend gold as if it were as plentiful as straw?"

"Peter," said the Glass-man, with an earnest and sorrowful look, "Peter, never speak to me of those men again; what do they gain by their wealth? A few worthless luxuries, at the risk of their salvation. Peter, you must not give up your trade. I knew your father and grandfather well: they were respectable and intelligent men, yet they were content to be charcoal burners; you must be so also. I hope it is not the love of an idle life that has brought you here."

Peter was startled by the seriousness of the old man's manner, and his cheek glowed as he answered—"No, indeed, Mr. Glass-man; I know very well that 'idleness is the root of all evil,' but I hope you will not be angry with me if I still wish to change my trade. A charcoal burner is regarded by the world as low and mean; the glass-makers and the raft-men are very much more respectable."

"'A haughty spirit goeth before a fall,'" answered the little Treasure-keeper; his tone of voice, however, was very friendly, and he smiled as he added—"You are a singular race, you mortals; few of you are content with your stations. The glass-maker wishes to be a timber merchant, and if that be granted him, he envies the woodmen, or would change conditions with the rangers. But let this pass; if you will promise to work hard, I will help you to change your trade, Peter. I watch over every Sunday-child, and am ready to grant them three wishes. The first two are unconditional; to the third I reserve the power of raising objections, if it be foolish. So, Peter, you may have your first wish now; but pray ask for something likely to profit you."

Peter's eyes sparkled. "Hurrah!" said he; "well, Mr. Glass-man, you are indeed the kindest friend in the world, and you may well be called the 'Treasure-keeper.' I am sure I am very much obliged to you; and I do not know what I could wish for more likely to profit me and make me happy, than that I should be able to dance as well as the King of the Dance, and always have as much money in my pocket as Eyekiel the Great."

"Oh, fool!" exclaimed the Treasure-keeper angrily, "a profitable wish truly! to be able to dance well and waste your money at play! Are you not ashamed of yourself, Peter? What good will it do your poor mother if you can dance well? As for your wish, it can only profit the public-house. You have got one more fine wish; see if you can choose something more reasonable."

Peter reflected for some minutes, and then said, "This time I wish for the largest glass-manufactory in the Black Forest, and plenty of money wherewith to carry on the business."

"Nothing else?" asked the Treasure-keeper anxiously, "nothing else?"

"I should like very well to have a horse and gig."

"Oh, Peter Munk, Peter Munk, you foolish boy!" cried the Glass-man, flinging his blue glass pipe angrily against the trunk of a pine; "a horse! a gig! Alas, alas! you should have wished for sense—sound, common sense—and not for gigs and horses; but never mind, do not be cast down; your last wish was not altogether so foolish as the first, a good glass manufactory is no contemptible thing, if you had but common sense and skill to take care of it. Had you wished for these, the horse and gig would have come of themselves."

"But, Mr. Treasure-keeper," answered Peter, "I have still one wish left, and, with your permission, I will now choose this sense and skill."

"You had better not; you may have some greater occasion for your wish, and you have sense enough if you will but use it, so now go home, and here, Peter, is my parting present; this purse contains 2,000 dollars; but take notice, never must you come here again to ask for money, for if you do, I shall be forced to hang you upon this pine; so have I done ever since I have dwelt in this wood. Three days since, old Winkfrity died, the owner of the principal manufactory in the forest. Go there the first thing to-morrow, and purchase the establishment, from his heirs; be honest, be industrious, and I will look in upon you from time to time, to counsel you and to give you a helping hand in those difficulties through which your shallow brains will not suffice to carry you; but above all things, I solemnly warn you to avoid the public-house. Peter, it has been the ruin of many."

Whilst the Treasure-keeper was speaking, he had been occupied in contriving another pipe, which he now quietly placed in his mouth, and giving his hand to Peter, in token of friendship, gradually disappeared in the volumes of pale, blue smoke, which issued from it.

When Peter reached home, he found his mother in great trouble about him, for the good woman could not help thinking that her son had been forced to enlist. Peter was in high spirits, and told his mother that he had met a good friend in the wood, who had counselled him to change his trade, and had

given him money to set him up as a glass-maker. Although Barbara Munk had lived all her life among the charcoal-burners, and had never tired of them, or their sooty faces, she was possessed of sufficient vanity to lead her immediately to look down upon her old associates and former pursuits; and she answered her son—

"Oh, that is pleasant: as the mother of a glass-maker, I can no longer be considered on a level with neighbours Trethel and Bertha; I shall, in future, take my place in church among the most respectable matrons."

Peter soon settled his business with the heirs of the glass-maker; he retained all the old workmen in his employ, and the business proceeded day and night. The novelty of everything around him pleased him greatly; he carefully superintended his workmen, went backwards and forwards in the manufactory, tried his hand at the work, and chatted with his men, who did not fail to laugh at him behind his back.

But he soon lost his interest in the work; came at first every other day, and finally but once a week. His workmen might do, meanwhile, exactly what they pleased in the manufactory, for he never interfered with them. All this originated *in his visits to the forest inn.*

The very first Sunday after his return from the haunted knoll, he went to the inn. The King of the Dance was already displaying his elegant steps on the green, and Eyekiel the Great was engaged in throwing dice for a heap of dollars. Peter quickly felt in his pocket; his first wish was granted—it was full of gold and silver pieces, and he felt his limbs ready to begin a dance, rivalling in elegance the far-famed movements of the king; Peter chose his partner, and took his place among the dancers. The King of the Dance placed himself near Peter, in whom, to his astonishment, he found a rival who would soon dispute his right to that title, which had so long distinguished him; for when he pirouetted three feet high in the air, Peter surpassed him by at least a foot; and the mincing paces, which were once so admired, were quite outdone by the superior elegance of the young glass-maker. All this surprised the by-standers; but when they heard that the elegant young man was the richest glass-manufacturer in the forest, their astonishment changed into feelings of respect. Peter lost more than twenty dollars in play that evening, yet he rattled the money in his pockets, as if he had many hundreds still left.

The King of the Dance was permitted to retain his name; but Peter was distinguished by the still more flattering appellation of the *Emperor*.

Among the most daring gamesters, none ventured so far as Peter; but the more he lost, the more he won! for he had wished always to be as rich as Eyekiel, who was generally his opponent at play; therefore, what Peter lost to Eyekiel was gain to himself.

By degrees, he fell into the lowest company, and was oftener called Gaming Peter than Emperor of the Dance; for he generally sat all day at the public-house, throwing dice.

As may well be supposed, the glass-manufactory did not thrive under such a master. Glass, indeed was made, but when made, it was not disposed of to any profit; for it was usually left on hand so long, that Peter was glad to sell it at half price, to travelling merchants, in order that he might have wherewithal to pay the workmen.

One evening, as he was returning home from the public-house, and—notwithstanding the wine he had swallowed in large quantities, to raise his spirits—was meditating sorrowfully on the wreck of his fortune, he suddenly perceived that he had a companion in his walk. A second glance enabled him to recognise the Treasure-keeper. Peter, not quite sober, became violently excited, and vowed that the little glass-man was the cause of all his misfortunes.

"Where are now my horses and my gig?" he cried; "What is the use of my glass-manufactory? I was happier as a charcoal-burner than I am now. Then, at least, I had no anxiety about pay-day: but *now*; what am I to do when the sheriff comes to value my goods, and will sell them by auction—to my shame—to pay my creditors?"

"Well," answered the Treasure-keeper, "that is not my fault; are these reproaches the reward of my benevolence? Who put it into your head to wish so foolishly? You desired to be a glass-maker, and yet did not know how to dispose of your glass when it had been made for you! Did I not caution you as to your wishes? Oh, Peter, you wanted sense, sound sense and prudence."

"Sense and prudence!" answered Peter; "do not talk to me of sense and prudence! I am as clever a lad as any other in this forest, and that I will soon teach you, Mr. Glass-man."

With these words, he seized the little man roughly by the

collar, exclaiming, "Now, Mr. Treasure-keeper in pine-wood green, I have you fast, and you shall not go until you grant me my third wish; pay me down on the spot two hundred thousand dollars, and give me a house, and——Oh! oh!" he shrieked, and wrung the hand which had grasped the collar of the little glass-man; for the latter had suddenly changed himself into burning glass, and disappeared.

Peter did not soon forget his folly and ingratitude, for his swollen hand reminded him of it constantly; but he smothered the voice of conscience, and reasoned thus: "When the manufactory is sold, and all my debts paid, I shall still have as much as Eyekiel the Great, and while there is gold to play for on Sunday, my store will not fail."

Certainly, Peter, you say true; you are ever to remain as rich as Eyekiel; but when Eyekiel is poor, how rich will you be?

And now were Peter's fortunes drawing to a crisis; Eyekiel lost his last dollar at play, and Peter vainly searched his pockets for the remnant of all his wealth! Then did he remember his first wish, and he groaned bitterly as his folly stared him in the face.

No friendly star lighted the wretched Peter to his home that night; and darker than the black darkness that shrouded every thing else from his sight, strode a well-known gigantic figure by his side, and a well-known voice said:—

"It is all over with you, Peter Munk; all your glory is at an end, and I could have told you, long ago, how it would be, if you put yourself into the hands of that stupid glass-maker; you can now see how those fare who despise my counsels. But I will not be hard on you. I pity your miserable condition; no one ever yet repented of following my advice, and I will give you another opportunity of seeking it. All to-morrow I shall be at your service; you will find me at any hour you like, at any place you will name, in the pine-wood."

Peter knew very well who thus addressed him; he wished to answer; but a cold shudder came over him, and he ran hastily home.

When Peter went to his manufactory the next morning, he found his workmen engaged in conversation with three visitors, in whom he recognised a sheriff and two policemen. The sheriff wished Peter a good morning, asked him how he had slept, and then drew from his pocket-book a long bill, which confirmed the poor glass-maker's worst fears.

"Can you cast accounts, or not?" asked the sheriff ironically; "come, be quick, for time presses, and I have a good deal of business on hand."

Peter, who knew he was ruined, desired the sheriff to value his house and furniture. Peter thought to himself, "I am not far from the pine-wood, and since the little spirit will not aid me, I must e'en betake myself to the great one!" He ran to the pine-wood as swiftly as if the policemen had been at his heels. When he reached the spot where the treasure-keeper had appeared to him, it seemed as if he were pulled back by an invisible hand; but he disengaged himself from its grasp, and continued to run till he had passed the ditch which had formerly saved him from Dutch Michael's fury; when on the other side he paused to take breath, and ere he had recovered himself, he whom he sought stood by his side.

"So you are here," said Michael scornfully, "you are more fortunate than you deserve to be, in escaping with a whole skin. What could you expect else from such a niggardly little fellow as the glass-man? But all your dealings with him are over. Come to my house, and we will have a little traffic together."

"Traffic," thought Peter, "what have I got to sell him? Will he have me serve him I wonder?" However, he said nothing, but followed his guide along a steep, woodland path, which led to a deep cleft in the side of a pine-covered hill. Michael leaped into the gloomy abyss from the frowning crags which encircled its yawning mouth, and assisted Peter to descend, who, on touching the ground, found himself in a dimly-lighted subterranean passage, through the many windings of which his guide conducted him, until they reached a small but good house; into this house Michael led him, and he found himself in a room differing in no wise from those above ground. The large stove, the wooden clock, the broad benches, the kitchen utensils arranged on projecting shelves—all were familiar to Peter's eyes. Michael offered him a seat at the table, on which he placed a flask of wine and a couple of glasses; and whilst they regaled themselves, Dutch Michael related such interesting tales of foreign lands, of magnificent cities and rivers, that Peter could no longer restrain himself, and told his host how much he wished he could thus see the world, and see similar adventures. "Ah! that is very easy to talk about," answered Michael; but you are a pretty fellow to go seeking for adventures; you, whose foolish heart trembles at every thing; and then you have fanciful ideas of honour and

the like; what did you feel when you lost your last dollar, and were turned out of the public-house with contempt? Doubtless, you felt a great deal; but *where* did you feel? Did it affect your *head*, Peter? And when the sheriff came this morning to turn you adrift on the world, a homeless wretch, did the sight of his cold, calculating countenance give you a *head-ache?* Tell me, Peter, *where* do you feel your woes?"

"In my *heart*," replied Peter, placing his hand on his left side, as he spoke, as if to still its throbbings.

"Do not be offended with me," continued Michael, "if I tell you plainly that you have thrown away many hundred dollars on beggars, and such like unprofitable persons; let me now ask you, what did you get in return? Blessings? aye, blessings, and much good did they do you; have they preserved you from want, from sickness, from sorrow? I trow not, Peter; and what do you think of the matter? and what made you so tender to the beggars, so careless of your own prosperity? was it your head, your eyes, your arms, your tongue, or any other of your members? No, Peter, it was your *heart*—your foolish *heart*."

"But what can I do?" asked Peter, mournfully; "I try in vain to master my heart, but in spite of me it throbs and beats."

"I believe you," interrupted his host, laughing. "Poor fellow, you cannot help yourself in this case; but give me the useless throbbing thing, and you will see how pleasant life will be without it!"

"Give you my heart!" cried Peter, violently excited. "No, never! why, I should die on the spot!"

"Aye, that you would," answered Michael quietly, "if a surgeon were to attempt to extract it from your breast; but that is not my intention, good friend; compose yourself, and follow me."

Michael rose as he spoke, and, opening a door, led Peter into an inner room.

His heart throbbed more than ever it had done before, as he stood on the threshold and looked around him. The room contained nothing but a number of wooden stands, on each of which was placed a glass box, containing a transparent fluid, whereon floated a heart, a human heart! Each of these boxes was labelled with the name of him whose heart it contained.

Peter read with eager curiosity the name of the sheriff, of Eyekiel the Great, the Long Schlurker, the King of the Dance, and many more of his most envied acquaintances. "Look!"

exclaimed Michael, "those who once owned these hearts have cast them away for ever! they have done with all the cares and anxieties of life, and right glad are they to have expelled from their breasts so troublesome a guest."

"But what do they carry in their breast instead?" asked Peter anxiously.

"This," replied Michael, handing him *a heart of stone.*

"What!" cried Peter, unable to repress a shudder at the sight. "A heart of stone!" is it not very heavy and cold, Mr. Michael?"

"It is cool, certainly; but what do you want with a warm heart? It is a very *quiet* one, Peter; it never swells with anger, or sinks with fear; it throbs not at grief, nor beats with the sickness of disappointed hopes."

"And is this all you mean to give me?" asked Peter, fretfully; "I came for gold, and you give me nothing but a bit of stone."

"Well, I think a hundred thousand dollars are enough to begin with, and, when they are spent, millions more are at your service."

"A hundred thousand dollars!" cried Peter joyfully; "excellent! give me the stone and the dollars, and here is my heart, with all its cares and troubles."

"You are a wise fellow, Peter," answered the host, laughing in a friendly manner; "come, let us go back to our wine; when we have drunk enough, I will count out the money for you!"

They went back to the sitting-room, and drank until sleep overpowered Peter, and he lost all consciousness of his situation.

When he awoke, he found himself in a handsome carriage upon the high road; behind him, as a dark speck in the landscape, lay the Black Forest.

At first, he doubted that it could be himself who thus rode in state, richly dressed, and he could not help wondering also, that he felt no regret at leaving his home for the first time. He thought on his peaceful forest life, and on his poor old mother, whom he left in helpless misery; but not a sigh could he heave, not a tear could he drop. "So much the better!" said he to himself. "Tears and sighs, love of home, and fond regrets come from the heart; and thanks to Dutch Michael, mine is cold for evermore!"

For two years he travelled, but in vain did he seek for pleasures; in vain he saw the most beautiful landscapes, the most

ingenious works of art. Nature had no longer a hold on his affections; his heart had no connection with his eyes or ears; so fine pictures, sweet music, and the kind smile of friendship's life—the warm grasp of friendship's hand—all passed unheeded by. The only pleasures left him were sensual—eating, drinking, sleeping; so passed his life.

At length he returned home; his carriage rolled over the soft sward, through the long, shadowy vistas of his native forest; his eye once more rested on the tall figures, and honest, friendly countenances of his countrymen; his ear was again met by the sound of the woodman's stroke; every thing was familiar to him, and he thought that he could surely now rejoice; but no! he had a heart of stone; and if stone weeps not for sorrow, neither can it laugh for joy.

His first visit was to Dutch Michael, who gave him a hearty welcome.

"Michael," said Peter, "I have now seen the world; but nothing that I have seen has given me any pleasure or satisfaction. That stony thing of yours that I carry in my breast oppresses me grievously. I am never sorrowful, it is true; nor am I ever angry; but then I never rejoice, and I am, to all intents and purposes, more dead than alive. Could you not make this heart of stone a little more excitable? or, better than all, give me back my own?

The Wood Demon laughed scornfully. "When you are dead, Peter Munk," said he, "you shall have your soft heart again—you shall feel once more; but on earth this can never be! You do not know what you are talking about; you are weary of travelling; but establish yourself at home—marry—use your riches, and you will have no reason to complain of your heart."

The news soon spread through the forest that Gaming Peter had returned richer than he had ever been.

Peter now engaged in the corn trade, and carried on extensive dealings with the poor of the forest, in which he displayed great avarice and harshness. When his customers could not pay their bills, Peter would brook no delay; the sheriff was immediately sent to seize their goods, and turn all families out of doors. At first, this occasioned Peter some inconvenience; for the unhappy beings he had ruined besieged his house—the men entreating forbearance, the women weeping silently, and the children clamouring for bread; but he soon put an end to "this cat's squalling," as he termed it, by setting a couple of bull-dogs on his petitioners.

But the most troublesome and incorrigible of them was "the old woman," who was no other than Peter's own aged mother. Barbara Munk had long been in great poverty, and forced to subsist on the bounty of some charitable persons; but, when her wealthy son returned, she hoped to end her days in peace and plenty. Her hopes were bitterly disappointed. Peter would do nothing for her. Sometimes, on Sunday evenings, when she tottered to the door of his house, he would send her a small piece of money, by a servant, in order to get rid of her; and though he marked well her pale face, her entreating looks, her feeble, bowed-down form, and thin, out-stretched hand; though he heard her trembling voice, as she thanked the servant and wished his master health and happiness, though her hollow cough met his ear, as she turned in sadness from his door, thinly clad and half starving, nothing could make any impression on his heart of stone! he only regretted that he had spent even the trifling sum he had sent her, on other than himself.

Peter at length determined to marry, but as he intended to make a very prudent choice, he took his time, and went hither and thither throughout the wood, and he might have had no difficulty in selecting a wife from the many fair forest-maidens. But beautiful as they were, not one was beautiful enough for him. He had almost given up his search, when he heard that the loveliest and gentlest maiden in the neighbourhood was the daughter of a poor wood-cutter. Timid as she was fair, she lived quietly with her father, and never shewed herself upon the green, nor sought to join in the dances and sports which were the delight of the forest youth.

When Peter heard of her, he made up his mind that she should be his wife, and accordingly he took an early opportunity of riding over to the distant hut, which had been pointed out to him as her abode.

The woodman received the wealthy Mr. Munk with no small astonishment; how much more was he surprised when he learnt his errand! The answer to Peter's gracious proposal was not long delayed; the woodman promised his daughter away, without consulting her, and shortly after, the lovely Lisbeth became Peter Munk's bride.

Lisbeth was young, and youth is ever hopeful; certainly she had anticipated more happines than she was fated to experience.

Peter was not unkind to *her*, and she might have learnt to love him, but his heartless conduct to the poor around him, especially to his old mother, grieved her more than she could say. When

she first entered on her duties as his wife, and as the mistress of his house, she gave away trifling sums to those who stood in need, and never let an aged person pass her door without a refreshing drink. But when Peter found out that this was her practice, and in truth Lisbeth took no pains to conceal it, his anger knew no bounds. "What," said he, "dare you waste my fortune on beggars? did you bring so very much into my house, that you presume to give away what you find there? Let me hear of no more such doings, or you shall feel the weight of my hand."

Poor Lisbeth's tears flowed fast, as she listened to her husband's cruel words; but had she known that his heart was hard, even as stone, Lisbeth would have wept and wondered still more! And now when she saw a beggar approaching the house, she would shut her eyes not to see his want and woe, and clasp her hands tightly to prevent them from unconsciously finding their way to her purse.

One day, Lisbeth sat at her cottage door, looking out on the green sward that surrounded it, whilst her busy fingers plied the distaff; the forest trees spread far and wide in every direction, but there were openings here and there, and the evening sun was gilding the dark green foliage, and casting lengthened shadows athwart the woody paths; the air was sweet with the breath of flowers, and tuneful with the voice of birds: the lovely weather and the quiet woodland scene had a soothing effect on Lisbeth; her husband, too, was absent from home, and, altogether, she was more cheerful than she had been for many weeks past.

Her light-hearted song was soon interrupted by the appearance of a way-worn traveller; he was an aged man, but heavily laden with a great sack, which he with difficulty deposited before Lisbeth's door, and implored her to take pity on him, and give him a draught of water; "for really," said he, "I am so exhausted, that unless I have some refreshment I shall faint on the spot."

Lisbeth hastened to the cottage, and soon returned with a mug of water; but when she reached the door, and saw the poor old man sitting on his sack, pale, faint, and weary, tears filled her eyes; perhaps she remembered, too, that Peter was not at home, for she put down the water, filled a goblet with sparkling wine, and carried it, with a large slice of rye-bread, to the poor traveller.

The old man looked at her till large tears rolled down his

withered cheeks; he then said in a trembling voice, "I am an old, a very old man; but I have never seen in all my life one who gave so freely, so kindly. You will not want your reward, however: such a heart cannot remain unrewarded!"

"It shall not! the reward is ready," cried a thundering voice, and Lisbeth and the traveller beheld, with equal astonishment and dismay, the flushed and angry countenance of Peter Munk.

"And this is the way you amuse yourself in my absence, by giving away my choicest wine to beggars, and offering my own goblet for the use of vagabonds? There, take your promised reward!"

Lisbeth had thrown herself at her husband's feet; she clasped her hands, and implored forgiveness; but what does a heart of stone know of compassion? Peter seized his riding whip, and, with all his force, struck with its massive handle, the fair forehead of his kneeling wife; she uttered no cry, but sank lifeless into the arms of the dismayed traveller. As he bent over the lovely form to see if life yet remained, the old man spake in a well-known voice, "It is all over, Peter Munk; you have crushed the loveliest and sweetest flower of the forest, and for you it shall never bloom again."

The colour forsook Peter's cheek as he answered, "So it is *you*, Mr. Treasure-keeper? However, what is done, is done, and cannot be helped now. I only hope that you will not accuse me of the murder."

"Wretch!" answered the Glass-man, "what would it boot me to bring your body to the gallows? It is not earthly judges you have to fear, but fear him to whom you have sold your soul."

"And if I have sold my soul, I have to thank you for it! it was you who drove me to it, and on you be its blood for ever."

Peter trembled at his rashness, as he beheld the changed form of the glass-man, who, in fearful rage, flung himself upon the cowardly wretch, and struck him to the ground.

"Worm!" burst in thundering accents from his lips, "I could destroy you in a moment, and send you to the doom you so justly merit; but for the sake of your dead wife, who gave me food and drink, I spare you for the present. Your punishment will not, however, be long delayed; you cannot live for ever; and you shall then repent to all eternity your dealings with Dutch Michael."

It was late at night when Peter Munk was found by some passers-by, lying on the ground at his own door. It was

long ere he could convince himself that all that had passed was dire reality, and no frightful dream, as he had at first supposed.

The deep solitude of his home was oppressive to him. True, he had a heart of stone, and could not feel; but whenever the thought of his gentle wife, murdered by his hand, came across him, he trembled like an aspen leaf; everything seemed to accuse him and make his heart of stone heavier than lead. The tears of the poor that had failed to soften him, the curses of those on whom he had set his dogs, the silent despair of his mother, the blood of the lovely Lisbeth, all cried out for vengeance upon him!

His dreams, too, were very fearful; but when his terror was greatest, a sweet, low voice whispered in his ear, "Dear Peter, seek a warmer heart." This happened for several nights in succession,

Peter's remorse and dread of detection and punishment increased hourly; he felt the voice to be that of his injured wife; he thought much of the punishment threatened by the Glass-man, and at length he determined to follow the gentle spirit's advice and seek a warm heart. He put on his Sunday suit, as he had done in happier days on similar occasions, and went to the pine-knoll. He soon reached the spot; the day was a gloomy one, and, as he stood before the gigantic pine and saluted it as heretofore, no cheering sunbeam broke through the thick branches over head to light up the scene. In a sad, faltering tone, he said—

> "O! Treasure-keeper, in pine-wood green
> For many a rolling year,
> Lord of the shadowy woodland scene,
> *Shew thyself to me here.*"

Then the little Glass-man came forth from the underwood, but he gave no friendly greeting to the unhappy Peter; he was dressed in deep mourning, his jerkin and hat of black-spun glass, and a long weeper attached to the pointed crown of the latter.

Peter knew but too well for whom he sorrowed. "What is your business with me, Peter Munk?" asked he in a sad tone.

"I have still a wish, Mr. Treasure-keeper," answered Peter with downcast eyes.

"Can hearts of stone wish?" replied the Glass-man; "you have everything your wicked thoughts can desire, and I am unwilling to gratify them further."

"But you promised me three wishes, Mr. Glass-man, and I have still one remaining; will you consent to gratify it?"

"I will, if it be a reasonable one," answered the spirit; "at any rate let me hear it."

"Oh! Mr. Treasure-keeper," cried the wretched man, "I implore you take this stone out of my breast; give me back my living heart! this is my sole desire on earth!"

"Give you back your heart! did I take it from you? Ask it of Dutch Michael!"

"Ah! he will never, never give it me."

"You make me pity you, wicked as you are," said the Glass-man, with a sorrowful look; "and as your wish is the best you could form, I will help you to its fulfilment. Listen and do just as I tell you." He then gave Peter directions how to act, and handed him a little cross of pure white glass. "Michael can neither touch your life nor your liberty whilst you fight him with this weapon; and when you have found what you seek, return again to me."

Peter Munk took the little cross, and set out for Michael's dwelling. He called him three times by his name, and the giant stood before him.

"So you have killed your wife, Peter!" said he with fearful laughter; "if you had not put an end to her, she would have ruined you with her charity; but you must leave the country for a little while; and I guess you are even now come for some money for your journey."

"I am come to deprive you of some of your treasure, certainly," said Peter.

Michael led Peter into his cottage, and handed him several rouleaux of dollars.

Peter counted them over, and said, "Now, Michael, I wish to be convinced that you have my living heart in your possession, and that I have a stone in its place."

"What! is it not so?" cried Michael, astonished; "do you not feel your heart as cold as ice in your breast? can you repent, or feel sorrow and fear? And I assure you, moreover, Peter Munk, that I have your living heart quite safe in the other room in a glass box."

Upon this, the demon, smiling grimly, threw open the door into the inner room, and cried, "Here, Peter, come and see your own heart; does it not beat high? could wax do that?"

"I do not know," said Peter; "but this I know, that that heart is made of some material or other."

"Of course it is made of your own flesh and blood, you

simpleton," said Michael angrily; "here, take it in your hand, feel how it throbs, and then doubt if it be yours."

Peter took the heart, pressed it to his side, felt indeed its anxious throbbings, and could now rejoice that it was once more in his power.

"Well, how do you feel?" asked Michael anxiously.

"Better than I have felt for a long time, Mr. Michael; and, moreover, I do not intend to part with my heart again, now that I have it."

"I see, you do not know me yet, Peter; come, give me back the heart again, if you please."

"Not so, Mr. Michael," cried Peter, stepping back and holding up the little cross; "I have been cheated by *you*, and now it is fairly *my* turn to deprive *you* of what is not yours."

The effect produced by these words was fearful; Michael fell back abashed before the cross; Peter fled hastily from the spot, followed by the ravings and threatenings of the conquered demon.

A fearful storm burst over the forest; the peals of thunder were echoed by the hollow rocks around; the vivid lightning flashed across the narrow path, illuminating the dark recesses and long shadowy avenues of the pine-wood; and the tall trees swayed and creaked in the wind, whilst their outspread branches proved a slight protection to the bewildered Peter from the heavy rain that poured in torrents down. He held on his course, however, and paused not till he reached the base of the hill on which the Glass-man's pine-tree stood.

His heart beat joyfully, but his only cause for joy was, that it beat at all; for memory was busy with him, setting before his affrighted conscience the dark catalogue of his crimes.

He thought mournfully of his aged mother; he forgot not his inhuman cruelty to his poor debtors; but chiefly did he think —and the thought was agony—of the lovely and gentle wife he had sacrificed to his avarice. Large tears rolled down his cheeks, and deep sobs impeded his utterance, as he again found himself in the presence of the Treasure-keeper.

The little man was smoking peacefully, and seemed in better spirits than before.

"Why do you weep, Peter?" asked he; "have you not succeeded? have you still your stony heart?"

"Ah, Mr. Glass-man," answered poor Peter, "when I had my cold heart I could not weep, my eyes were as dry as the thirsty flowers in July. No; I have my living heart again, but it is ready to break at the remembrance of all my crimes.

"Peter, you *have* been very wicked," said the Glass-man solemnly; "wealth and idleness have been your ruin; but, great as your misdeeds have been, there is still hope for you. Remember, Peter, that the cold heart is gone. I trust for ever, and therefore hope for a better mind!"

"I can hope for nothing," said Peter despairingly. "I am alone on the earth; my conscience my only companion, and an accusing conscience gives the guilty soul no rest. My mother can never forgive my conduct to her; perhaps she may be dead too, killed by her son's unkindnesss. And my wife! my Lisbeth! Oh! Mr. Treasure-keeper, all you can do for me is to put an end to my remorse by slaying me on the spot. I pray you, do so, and end my woes."

"What?" exclaimed the little man, turning on Peter a look which seemed to chill the blood in his veins, and in a voice of terrible anger—"What sayest thou? Dost THOU seek death? Thou, the miser, the drunkard, the murderer? But, be it so; I will grant your request. My axe is hard at hand."

"O mercy! mercy!" shrieked Peter in agony of terror, "I thought not what I said; O spare me, spare me! I am unfit to live, but more unfit to die!"

"No, no," cried the Glass-man, "it is too late now; you have asked for death, and you shall die. I will be trifled with no longer."

"Spare me but for a day!" exclaimed Peter, throwing himself on his knees.

"Why should I spare you?" asked the Glass-man with a bitter sneer; "you spared not Lisbeth."

"But half a day, then, that I may spend it in prayer?"

"No, nor a quarter of a day—no, nor an hour—no, nor a quarter of an hour. Come, bare your neck for the axe!"

So saying, the Glass-man went behind the pine-tree, and was lost from sight. Peter continued kneeling on the grass, offering up such prayers as rose to his lips, and thus awaited his death stroke. Oh! the agony of those few minutes—for they *were* minutes, though they seemed like years—while the Glass-man was absent!

When those minutes were past, Peter heard light footsteps behind him. He groaned bitterly—"Oh that I had been wise! oh that I had listened to advice! Oh that it were not too late now to show my contrition!"

"I am come to slay you, as you desired," said the Treasure-keeper. "Will you not give me a farewell look, Peter?"

Peter had closed his eyes to escape the cold, shimmering brightness of the descending axe. He now opened them, and lo, it was not the form of the old Glass-man on which his eyes first rested. A sweet, youthful countenance smiled on him, and a well-known aged face looked tearfully at him.

"My mother! my wife!" cried he. "Lisbeth, do you yet live? Mother, can you forgive me? Oh! this is too much, far too much."

"All is forgiven and forgotten by *them*," said the Treasure-keeper. "But if I spare you at their prayer, it is because I have hopes that you will henceforth be a different man. I grant you life; take heed you do not abuse the gift. I grant you life, but it is upon the condition that you set yourself in earnest to the task of reformation. You have been greedy and sensual: now you must mortify your appetites. You are by nature covetous: now you must labour hard, and give a portion of all you earn to the poor and needy. You have neglected to pray: take heed that one night in every week—the night of the same day in which you attempted (and, but for my intervention, would have taken) your wife's life—that one night in every week, from year's end to year's end, you spend in prayer at the top of yonder mountain. And now farewell; but take heed that you trifle not with the Treasure-keeper!"

Then he disappeared, and Peter, whose penitence was sincere, became the master of himself and the conqueror of his evil passions; and often, during the remaining course of his humble but pious and peaceful life, did Peter say, "It is better to be poor and contented with poverty, than to be rolling in riches and possess a COLD HEART withal!"

THE SHEIK OF ALEXANDRIA AND HIS SLAVES—*THE DWARF.*

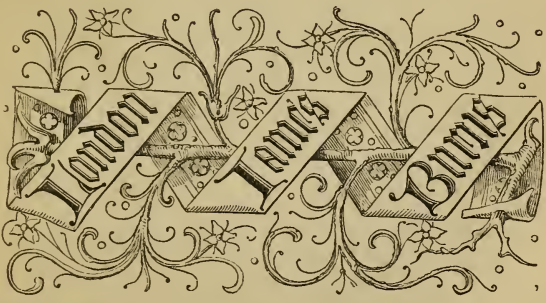
p. 24.

Select Popular Tales.

From the German

of

Wilhelm Hauff.



RBR
Jantz
#788
no 4

Contents.

ADVERTISEMENT.

I. THE CARAVAN:

	Page
1. Caliph Stork	6
2. The Spectre Ship	16
3. The Severed Hand	25
4. Fatima's Rescue	39
5. Little Fly	55
6. The False Prince	70

II. THE COLD HEART.

III. THE SHEIK OF ALEXANDRÍA AND HIS SLAVES:

1. Nosey the Dwarf	9
2. Abner the Jew	36

Page
3. The fate of Said 46
4. Almansor 73

IV. The Legend of the Hirschgulden.

V. The Portrait of the Emperor.

VI. The Grünwiesel Dancer.

Advertisement.

THE English reader is here presented with a selection from the fictions of Wilhelm Hauff, than which few writings of the kind have been more popular in their own country. Their merits are such as may be seen at a glance; but, though not pretending to any great depth, they will be admitted to be extremely clever and agreeable productions. The greater number of pieces in this volume are of the "Märchen" class; and these are, perhaps, among Hauff's happiest attempts—as, for instance, "The Caliph Stork," "The Cold Heart," "Nosey the Dwarf," "The Spectre Ship," &c.—in many of which a pleasing and instructive moral thread will be seen to run through the fiction. The others are of the "Novelleu," or "Erzählungen"* class, and vary considerably in their character. "The Grünwiesel Dancer" is an admirable specimen of the droll kind, as is "The Severed Hand" of the graver description. "The Portrait of the Emperor," it is almost needless to say, finds a place simply on account of its merits as a pleasing and well-written tale, and not with any intention of creating admiration for the character and principles of Napoleon, with respect to whom the translator would rather, as might be expected, sympathise with

* On the words "*Märchen*" and "*Erzählungen*"—see "The Sheik of Alexandria," p. 43.

the anti-Napoleonist baron in the tale. There is the less need, however, of cautionary remark on this head, seeing that a "History of the French Revolution," comprising a full account of the career of Buonaparte, forms one of the volumes of the present series. The translator has somewhere read an account of the last hours of this remarkable man, in which he is represented as clasping a crucifix to his breast; and to this there is possibly an allusion in Manzoni's celebrated ode, of which an original translation is given at the end of the tale.

These prefatory remarks will be appropriately concluded by a very pretty introduction, which Hauff prefixed to one of the series of his "Märchen," on its first appearance in the form of an annual or keepsake.

THE ADVENTURES OF FAIRY-TALE.

In a beautiful and distant realm, in whose ever-green gardens the sun is said never to set, Queen Fancy has held sway from time immemorial until the present day. For centuries long she has been dispensing blessings to her subjects with a liberal hand, and has been loved and revered by all who have known her. But the queen has too great and good a heart to be satisfied with simply conferring benefits in this way. Once she descended to earth herself in the royal array of eternal youth and beauty, for she had heard that there were men living there who passed their life in doleful sadness and oppressive toil. She brought them the fairest gifts her realm afforded; and ever since the beautiful queen passed over the plains of earth, men have been happy in their toil, and cheerful in their gravity. And her children too, not less beautiful and lovely than their royal mother, she sent forth to gladden mankind.

Now it came to pass one day that Fairy-tale, the queen's eldest daughter, returned from the earth. Her mother noticed that she looked sorrowful; yes, she now and then could not help thinking she had even been weeping.

"What is the matter with you, Fairy-tale?" said the queen;

"you have been so sorrowful and downcast since your journey! —will you not tell your mother what is the matter?"

"Ah! dear mother," replied Fairy-tale, "I should certainly not have been silent so long, only I knew that our troubles were one."

"Tell me all, child," said the beautiful queen; "grief is a heavy burden, you know, which is too much for one, but which two can easily bear between them."

"Then I will tell you, dear mother," answered Fairy-tale, "since you desire it.

"You know how I love the society of mankind,—how glad I am to sit down with even the poorest peasant at his cottage-door, to while away an hour with him when work is over. In former times they used to greet me kindly, and shake hands with me when I came; and they followed me with smiles of delight when I went away: but now, alas, it is so no more!"

"Poor little Fairy-tale!" said the queen, stroking her cheek, which was moist with a tear; "but perhaps this is all a fancy of yours?"

"Oh, no; I feel too sure of it," rejoined Fairy-tale; "they do not love me any more. I am met with cold looks wherever I go; they are not glad to see me any where now; even the children, who used always to be so fond of me, laugh at me, and look wise, and turn their backs upon me."

The queen leant her forehead on her hand, and remained a while in silent thought. "And how comes it, Fairy-tale," said the queen, "that the people below are so changed?"

"Men have put cunning sentinels on the watch," answered Fairy-tale, "who are always prying into, and testing every thing that comes out of your kingdom. So if any one comes who is not quite to their taste, they begin to make a great noise, and to beat him, or they tell men such stories about him (and men always believe them), that he is immediately driven away in disgrace. Ah! mother, there is not a spark more of love or hearty faith to be found. How well my little brothers, the *Dreams*, are off: they skip so lightly and merrily down to the earth, and don't care a fig for those cunning men; they go to people when they are asleep, and weave and paint them all kinds of pretty things that gladden the heart and please the eye!"

"Your brothers are light of foot," said the queen; "and, after all, my dear, you have no reason to envy them. Besides, I know those border guards very well, and men are not so wrong in setting them on the watch; for many a self-conceited

creature has gone and given himself airs, just as if he had come straight from our kingdom; and yet, at most, he had only got a look at us from some distant mountain or other."

"But why make *me* suffer for this,"—replied Fairy-tale, crying,—"me, your eldest daughter? Ah! if you knew how they treated me: they actually called me an old maid, and threatened not to let me in at all the next time!"

"What! not let my daughter in any more?" replied the queen, and anger brought a deeper flush on her cheek; "but I see very well how all this is,—your spiteful aunt has been telling false stories of us."

"*Fashion* do you mean? impossible!" cried Fairy-tale! "she always pretended to be so kind to us before!"

"Oh, I know the false hussy," replied the queen; "but try again, my dear child, in spite of her; one must never be tired of doing good."

"Ah, mother, but if they shut the door upon me outright, or if they tell tales of me, till men refuse to look at me, and let me stand lonely and neglected in the corner?"

"If the old ones," said the queen, "who are fooled over by Fashion, despise you, then make up to the young! they are my favourites; to them I send my prettiest pictures by your brothers, the Dreams: yes, I have often floated down to them myself, and kissed and fondled them, and played games with them; and they know me quite well too. To be sure, they don't know my name, but I have often seen them looking up and smiling at my stars at night, and clapping their hands for joy in the morning, when my snow-white lambs were moving across the sky. And when they grow older, they love me still; for then I help the pretty girls among them to weave garlands of different colours; and the noisy boys are quieter when I sit down by them on the rocky crag, calling up high castles and shining palaces from the misty veil of the far blue hills, and forming bold troops of riders and strange pilgrim-bands from the crimsoned clouds of evening."

"Oh, the dear children!" cried Fairy-tale, with emotion; "yes, so it shall be. I will make another trial with *them*."

"Do so, darling child," said the queen—"go to them; but stay, I will dress you a little as you should be, first; so that you will please the little ones, and the old ones won't send you away. Look now, I will give you the garb of a KEEPSAKE!"

"Of a keepsake, mother? Ah! I shall be ashamed of looking so fine."

The queen made a sign, and her servants brought her the pretty dress of a keepsake. It was of a gay and beautiful appearance, and woven with many attractive figures. Her maids braided the pretty child's long hair, tied her golden sandals on her feet, and put on the dress.

Modest little Fairy-tale did not dare to look up; but her mother looked at her with delight, and embraced her. "Go," said she to the little creature; "my blessing be with you. And if they despise you and scoff at you, come back to me; perhaps an after race, truer to nature, will give you their hearts again."

So spake Queen Fancy; and Fairy-tale went down to the earth. With a beating heart she approached the place where the cunning sentinels were lodged: she hung her little head, drew her beautiful robe closer round her, and with a trembling step approached the gate.

"Halt!" cried a deep, rough voice; "out with the watch; here's a new keepsake coming!"

Fairy-tale trembled when she heard this; a number of angry-looking old men rushed out: they had sharp-pointed pens in their hands, and they turned them on Fairy-tale.

One of them stepped up to her, and seized her roughly by the chin. "Come, head up, Miss Keepsake!" cried he; "let us look you in the face, and see if you are of the right sort or not."

Blushing, Fairy-tale raised her little head, and opened her little black eyes.

"Fairy-tale!" cried the guards, splitting their sides with laughter; "Fairy-tale! we couldn't think what was coming. Well, how came you by this new dress?"

"Mother dressed me in it," answered Fairy-tale.

"Oh! oh! she wants to pass you off on us in this way? It won't do—it won't do. Away with you! Be off this instant!" cried all the sentinels at once, raising their sharp-pointed pens.

"I only want to go to the children," said Fairy-tale, entreatingly; "that you will let me do, surely?"

"Is there not rubbish enough of this sort running wild about the country?" cried one of the watch. "You do nothing but talk nonsense to our children."

"Let us see what she has this time," said another.

"Very well," cried they all. "Come, out with your stores; be quick, for we haven't much time to waste on such as you!"

Fairy-tale stretched out her little hand, and with her forefinger made a number of signs in the air. Then gay forms

were seen to pass: fine horses and carriages—splendidly-accoutred knights, and ladies—castles—churches—palaces—kings and queens, with their equipages and courtiers—giants and dwarfs—birds and beasts and fishes—still woods, busy squares, well-peopled streets; all these and many more such visions floated by, in vivid portraiture and chequered throng.

In the enthusiasm with which Fairy-tale had summoned up the figures, she had not observed that the guards at the gate had gradually fallen asleep. She was just going to make new signs, when a man approached her and took her kindly by the hand: "Look! good Fairy-tale," said he, pointing to the sleepers; "your pretty things are not for such people as these. Make haste and slip through the gate; then they won't think that you are in the country, and you will be able to go your way unnoticed and uninterrupted. I will take you to my children, and make a snug pleasant little place for you at my fireside. There you may live and do just as you like; and when my boys and girls have done their lessons, they may come to you with their playfellows, and listen to you as long as you please. Would you like this?"

"Oh! how gladly will I follow you to your dear little ones!" said Fairy-tale; "what trouble will I not take to afford them a pleasant hour!"

The good man nodded kindly, and nimbly lifted the little maiden over the feet of the slumbering watchmen. Fairy-tale looked round with a smile when she had safely passed them, and then slipped quickly in at the gate.

The Sheik of Alexandria, and his Slaves.

WHAT an extraordinary man was the Sheik of Alexandria! and how the people stared at him as he passed along the streets in the morning, on his way to the mosque, where it was his office to read the Koran to the faithful! His turban was of the finest cachemire, and his magnificent robe was bound about his waist with a girdle of the worth of fifty camels. His step was slow and solemn. His ample brow and overhanging eyebrows shaded a pair of eyes which bespoke the deepest thought, and at every five or six steps he stroked his long beard.

"He is truly a fine-looking man," said one of the crowd.

"And a rich one," said a second; "very rich. Has he not

a castle on the harbour of Constantinople, and estates, and fields, thousands of cattle, and many slaves?"

"Aye!" added a third, "and the Tartar who has just arrived with dispatches from the Porte—from the Sultan himself (whom the Prophet protect!)—tells me that the sheik is held in great consideration by the Reis-Effendi, by the Capitan Pasha, and, above all, by the Sultan himself."

"Ah!" cried a fourth; "his steps are blessed, and he is a noble lord; but—but—you know what I mean."

"Yes, yes," whispered the crowd among themselves; "he has also his trials. I would not change places with him. He is rich, it is true, but—but——"

Ali Banu possessed a splendid house in the finest square of Alexandria; a broad terrace stretched before it, walled with marble and shaded with palm-trees, where the Sheik sat to smoke his hookah in the evening. Twelve richly dressed slaves at a respectful distance awaited his signal. The office of one was to hold his betel leaf, of another to shade him from the sun, of a third to present his sherbet in vessels of massive gold, of a fourth to drive away the flies with a fan of peacock's feathers. Some of them bore lutes and horns, to delight their master with music, should he desire it, and the best instructed brought scrolls to read to him. But in vain did they await his signal; neither music nor reading had charms for his ear; the sherbet and the betel-leaf were forgotten, and the flies buzzed unnoticed around him.

The passers by stopped at times, to admire the splendour of the house and the rich dresses of the slaves; but at the gloomy aspect of the possessor of all these riches, as he sat moodily under the shade of his palms, regarding but the blue smoke of his hookah, they shook their heads in pity, and exclaimed—

"Truly, this man is poorer than the poorest among us, for the Prophet has denied him the power of enjoying what he has." And so they passed laughing on their way.

One evening, when the Sheik was thus seated amid his brilliant suite, although seemingly indifferent to the splendour which surrounded him, a group of lively young men stood near him, and made their remarks on what they considered his senseless conduct.

"What a fool the Sheik Ali Banu is," said one. "Had I his treasures, how differently would I spend them! I would pass my days in feasting and delights; I would fill my chambers with guests, and these melancholy halls should ring with joy and laughter."

"Not a bad idea," answered another; "but many guests consume a fortune very quickly, were it as large as the Sultan's (whom the Prophet preserve!); but if I were seated under those palm-trees, methinks my slaves should sing and play and dance to me, and show me a thousand wonderful tricks. I would smoke my hookah and drink sherbet like the king of Bagdad."

"The Sheik," said a third, who was an author, "must be a well informed man, for his lectures on the Koran shew him to be intimately acquainted with all the best poets and authors; but he does not conduct himself like a reasonable being. There stands a slave with his arms full of scrolls; I would give my best robe for a sight of one of them, for they must be rare productions; but there sits he smoking his pipe, and leaves the books to themselves. If I were Ali Banu that fellow should read to me until he had no more breath, or until it were too dark to see, and after that he should read me to sleep."

"Ah! your projects are all very fine," cried a fourth, with a laugh. "Eating and drinking, singing and dancing, and listening to the songs and proverbs of poor wretched poets. I should do very differently. The Sheik has some of the finest horses in the world, and quantities of camels and money: I should travel—travel to the end of the world—to Muscovy, and perhaps to France. No journey would appear too long for me to view the beauties of the world; that is what I would do if I were in the place of yonder man."

"Youth is the time for joy and pleasure," said an old and unpretending man, who stood near, and had overheard their conversation; "but permit me to say that it is also the season for folly, and for talking about what it does not understand."

"What do you mean by that, old man?" said the astonished youths. "Are you alluding to us? How do our remarks on the Sheik's manner of living concern you?"

"He who is wiser than his neighbour should correct his errors," replied the old man; "the Prophet has so willed it. The Sheik, it is true, is blessed with riches, and all that his heart can desire; but his reason for sorrow is a deep one. Think you that he was always thus? No: fifteen years ago, he was as gay and lively as a gazelle, and in the full enjoyment of existence; he had then a son, the pride of his life, handsome, well formed, and the admiration of all beholders; few could refrain from envying the Sheik the possession of such a treasure, for at ten years old he had the wisdom and sagacity of many a person of eighteen."

"And is he dead? Alas, poor Sheik!" said the young writer.

"It would have afforded him some consolation to know that he was gone to dwell with our Prophet in the mansions of bliss; but, alas, his sore trial afforded him no such comfort as this. At the time when our country was overrun with the Franks, who ravaged and destroyed, like hungry wolves, wherever they set foot, Alexandria was beset with them, and at last they made an attack on the Mamelukes. The profound skill and knowledge of the Sheik had hitherto enabled him to keep on pretty good terms with them; but matters now changed, and, whether on account of his riches, or of the protection which he afforded to his brothers in the faith, I know not; suffice it to say that they visited his house, and accused him of having supplied the Mamelukes with arms, horses, and provisions. In vain did he protest his innocence; the Franks are a hard-hearted people when money is in the case. They carried off his son as a hostage, and not all the immense sums which the Sheik offered for his restoration would induce them to release him, as they hoped by this means to exact still higher terms. At last there arrived a command from their bashaw, or whatever they call him, to make sail. No one in Alexandria knew a word of it until they saw them far away in the wide ocean. Young Kairam was thus carried off, and nothing has been heard of him since."

"Alas! poor man! Allah has indeed severely stricken him," cried the young men with one accord; for their feelings were interested for the unfortunate Sheik, who, in the midst of so much splendour, sat lonely and sad under the palm-tree's shade.

"His beloved wife died of a broken heart. He then purchased and fitted out a vessel, and having persuaded the foreign physician, who lives at the foot of the spring yonder, to accompany him, he sailed for France in search of his lost son. After a voyage of many days, they arrived at the land of the giaours and unbelievers who had so long infested Alexandria. Dreadful scenes were there enacting. The Franks had killed their sultan and his bashaws, and rich and poor were striving for the mastery, and who could best cut one another's heads off. In short, the whole country was in disorder. Their search after young Kairam was in vain; no one knew anything of him, and the foreign doctor advised the Sheik to leave the country while their own heads were yet safe on their shoulders. So they returned home, and since that time the Sheik has passed his

days in mourning for his son, and truly not without cause. Can he eat or drink without thinking to himself, 'My poor Kairam may be suffering from hunger and thirst?' and when he wraps his rich shawls around him, and dresses himself as his rank and station require him to do, can he refrain from the reflection that Kairam may be without a covering from the inclemency of the elements? And when he sees himself surrounded by his dancing and singing and reading slaves, must he not feel that his poor son may be also performing his dances and his songs for the pleasure of his foreign master? It is this that softens his feelings towards his slaves, and renders him charitable towards the poor; for he hopes that Allah will, in recompence of this, move the hearts of the Franks to treat his son with the same kindness. For this cause, also, he gives freedom to twelve of his slaves on each anniversary of the day on which his son was torn from him."

"I have heard of this," interrupted the writer; "but people relate it in astonishment, as they make no mention of his son, and are, therefore, not aware of the motive from which he acts: they merely ascribe it to his love of the marvellous, and say that the freedom is granted to him who relates the best story."

"Do not believe half that you hear," said the old man. "I have told you the facts as they are. It is extremely probable that during these long and tedious days he may wish to be amused with tales; but, believe me, the freedom is granted for the sake of his son alone. It begins to get cool, and I must be going. *Schalem aleikum*—peace be with you, young gentlemen, and think more favourably for the future of the good Sheik."

The youths thanked their old acquaintance for his narration, and bestowing one more glance on the bereaved father, they proceeded homewards, remarking to one another, "Who would be the Sheik?"

Not very long after this conversation, they happened again to be walking through the streets at the time of morning prayers, and, recalling to each other's recollection the circumstances of the old man's story, they looked with feelings of compassion towards the mansion of the Sheik; but what was their astonishment at beholding it decked and ornamented in the richest manner! From the roof, on which gaily dressed slaves were parading, waved banners and pennons, and the hall was richly carpeted. Silken stuffs were laid on the steps, and the very street was spread with such cloths as one would covet for a state display.

"Ah! how changed must the Sheik be within these few days!" said the young writer. "Is he going to give a feast, and exercise his singers and dancers? Only look at these carpets; are any such to be found in all Alexandria? And the cloth on the common path-way! It is really a shame to step on it."

"Shall I tell you what I think?" said another. "He is expecting some visitor of distinction, for such preparations are only made when some very rich proprietor, or an Effendi, from the Grand Seignor, honours a house with his presence. Who can be coming to-day? See, is not that our friend, the old man? He no doubt knows all about it, and we must make him tell us. Here, old gentleman! will you not come and chat a little with us?"

After sundry signals, the old man's attention was attracted, and he speedily recognized the young people with whom he had so lately conversed. They inquired of him, for whose expected arrival so many preparations were making at the Sheik's.

"I am not surprised at your imagining that a feast is about to be celebrated at Ali Banu's," answered the old man, "on account of the expected visit of some great personage; but that is not the case. To-day is the 12th of the month Ramadan, you know, and on this day the Sheik lost his son."

"Now by the beard of the Prophet," exclaimed the young men in a breath, "was ever anything so extraordinary? Everything bespeaks feasting and holiday, whereas I should have thought this the saddest day of the whole year to the Sheik. Surely he must be a little wrong in the head."

"Do you still jump so quickly at conclusions, my young friend?" said the old man, laughing. "Your arrows are piercing, and your bow well strung; but still you have shot wide of the mark. Know, then, that the Sheik to-day expects his son."

"He is then found?" cried the young men, in great joy.

"No—and he would be a long time finding him; but listen. About eight or ten years ago, when the Sheik had as usual began this day in grief, and had freed a certain number of slaves, and distributed meat and drink to the poor, a dervise, who, faint and weary, had laid himself down in the shade of the house, also partook of the Sheik's bounty. He was a holy man, well versed in prophetic lore and in the signs of the stars. When refreshed by the good things of which he had partaken, he came to the Sheik, and telling him that he was acquainted

with all the circumstances of his melancholy history, he asked if this were not the very day on which he lost his son; assuring him at the same time, that his grief would ultimately be turned into joy, for that on this very day, some time or other, his son would return. It would have been a shame for a Mussulman to doubt the word of so sacred a person; and though the prediction was not sufficient to chase the grief of Ali Banu entirely from his heart, he cannot forbear from expecting his son's return on each anniversary of the day, and it is for this reason that he embellishes his house as you see.

"Most wonderful!" exclaimed the writer. "I would that I could view all these preparations nearer, could see him thus sorrowing in the midst of splendour, and, above all, could hear some of the narratives related to him by his slaves."

"Nothing is easier," said the old man. "The overseer of the slaves is one of my most intimate friends, and always secures me a place in the hall on these occasions, where, amidst the crowd of friends and dependants, I can remain unobserved. I will ask him to get you also admittance. As there are only four of you, it may easily be contrived. Be here again at nine o'clock, and I will give you an answer."

Thus spoke the old man; and the youths parted from him with thanks, full of curiosity for the issue of this affair.

Returning, at the appointed hour, to the square before the Sheik's house, and finding there their old friend awaiting them, they learned from him that the overseer had given him permission to conduct them to the hall. Entering, therefore, by a side door, which he carefully reclosed, he led them through a multitude of passages, and at length arrived at the great hall, where they found an immense concourse of people, among whom were richly dressed persons, noble lords, and friends of the Sheik, who were come to offer him comfort in his affliction. Slaves were there of all descriptions and nations, and all seemed to sympathize in the grief of their beloved master. At the end of the hall, on a rich divan, sat the most intimate of Ali's friends, served by their slaves; and on the ground near them reposed the Sheik himself, for his profound melancholy forbid his seating himself, except in the most lowly position; his head rested on his hand, and he seemed deaf to the words of consolation which were proffered to him on all sides. Opposite to him were placed a row of men of different ages, clad in the habiliments of slaves. The old man informed his friends, that these were the persons to whom Ali Banu was about to restore their

freedom. Among them were several Franks, one of whom was remarkable for his youth and beauty. The Sheik had purchased him but a few days before, of a slave dealer from Tunis, and was now about to grant him his liberty, in the hopes that the more foreigners he could restore to their native land, the sooner would the Prophet be induced to restore his beloved child to his arms again.

As soon as refreshments had been served round, the Sheik made a sign to the overseer of the slaves, who, rising amid a profound silence, advanced towards the slaves who were expecting their freedom, and, in an audible voice, thus addressed them : —

"You who are to-day to enjoy your liberty through the clemency of my lord, Ali Banu, Sheik of Alexandria, do now as is the custom of the house on this day, and relate a story."

After whispering together, an old slave took up the word, and began as follows : —

The History of Nosey, the Dwarf.

MANY persons suppose that fairies and enchanters were confined to the times of Haroun Alraschid, the Sultan of Bagdad, and no longer exist; but this is a great mistake. The tales which one picks up at market, of the tribe of genii and their princes, are all from good authority. Fairies are still to be seen, and not very long ago, I was myself witness to an adventure where the genii made themselves visible, as I will now relate.

In one of the largest towns of my own dear country, Germany, there lived, for many years, an honest cobbler and his wife. During the day, he sat at the corner of the street, mending such shoes and slippers as were entrusted to him, so as to look as good as new; but he was obliged to find leather, and he was very poor. His wife sold fruit and vegetables, the produce of a small garden near the gate; and people bought of her from her tidy appearance, and the excellence of the things she sold.

These poor people had but one son, a pretty, nice boy, of eight years old, well grown, and forward for his age. He sat with his mother in the market, and assisted the women and cooks who bought of her, to carry home the fruit; for which he seldom returned without a suitable recompence in the shape of a plum, a bit of money, or a cake; for the masters of these cooks were always glad to see the pretty boy, and paid him handsomely.

One day, the cobbler's wife was seated as usual in the market, with some baskets of cabbage and other vegetables before her, together with various herbs and seeds. She had also some small baskets of early pears, and apples, and apricots. Little

Jacob, for so was the boy called, sat near her, and with his shrill, clear voice continued to call his goods—"Here, gentlemen, fine fresh cabbage and greens, early pears; here, ladies, early apples and apricots. Who will buy? My mother gives good measure." An old woman now came into the market, in a faded and tattered dress. Her face was thin and sharp, wrinkled with age, with a nose like a needle, which very nearly met her chin. A long stick was in her hand, by the assistance of which she hobbled, and shuffled, and tottered along in such an unsteady manner, that it was only wonderful she did not fall on her pointed nose.

The cobbler's wife was much struck with the appearance of this old woman, for in all the sixteen years she had sat in the market, she thought she had never seen so extraordinary a figure; and she could not forbear an involuntary shriek as the hag hobbled towards her, and made a stand at her basket.

"Are you Jane, the greengrocer?" said she, in a cracked, disagreeable voice, while her head was in a perpetual shake.

"Yes," answered the market woman. "Are you in want of anything?"

"We shall see, we shall see. What have you got?" said the old woman, stooping down, and rummaging among the herbs with a pair of dirty looking, dark brown hands, crushing the tender, well washed salad with her long spindle fingers, and applying each herb in turn to her long nose, until the greengrocer's heart sank within her. She, however, dared say nothing; for besides being aware that people have a right to examine what they think of buying, this old woman inspired her with a sort of dread. After thoroughly turning over the contents of the basket, the old creature exclaimed in an under tone, "Sad stuff—sad cabbage: nothing here that I want—everything was better fifty years ago: sad stuff—sad stuff!"

Such remarks as these awakened the ire of little Jacob, who exclaimed in a rage, "You are an impertinent old woman: first you rummage in the basket with your nasty brown fingers, and mix all the things together; and then you must needs put them to your long nose, so that nobody will buy them; and you finish by calling them sad stuff, although the duke's cook himself always deals with us."

The old woman answered him with the same warmth, and laughing wildly, said, "Since my beautiful long nose pleases you so much, you shall have just such a one over your chin."

While she thus spoke, she shuffled towards another basket,

in which lay some fine cabbages; and selecting two or three of the best, she squeezed them together until they sounded again, when, throwing them back into the basket, she cried, "Bad things—bad cabbage!"

"Don't shake your head in such a way," said the boy, in an agony of passion. "Your throat is as thin as a cabbage stalk, and would easily break; and then your head would fall into the basket; and what would you do then?"

"What! does not my slender throat please you?" muttered the old woman, with a laugh; "then thou shalt have none at all. Thy head shall stick fast between thy shoulders, that it may not fall from thy little body."

"Prate no more nonsense with the child," said the market-woman. "If you want anything, please to say so, and not frighten away all the other customers."

"Very true," answered the old hag, with a withering glance. "I will take these six cabbages; but as I cannot carry them home myself, you must let your son take them for me, for which I will pay him well."

The child with great earnestness entreated his mother not to send him with the old woman, for whom he had conceived the greatest horror; but she represented to him, what a sin it would be to allow the feeble old creature to carry such a load herself; so he obeyed her, though with the greatest reluctance, and wrapping up the cabbages in a cloth, he followed the old woman out of the market.

They did not proceed at a very quick rate; but at the end of nearly three-quarters of an hour, they arrived at a deserted part of the town, and stopped before a ruined house. The old woman now drew from her pocket a rusty hook, which, on applying to the small keyhole, caused the door immediately to fly open with a creaking noise. What was the surprise of Jacob on entering! The interior of the house was richly ornamented; the walls and roof being of marble, the furniture of ebony, inlaid with gold and precious stones, and the floor of glass, and so slippery, that the child slid and fell several times. The old woman now made use of a silver whistle, the sound of which echoed through the house, and summoned several Guinea-pigs, who came running up the steps on their hinder legs, to the astonishment of Jacob. They wore walnut shells on their feet instead of shoes, the same sort of clothes as his own, and hats of the newest fashion.

"Wretches, where are my slippers," said the old hag, throw-

ing at them her stick, until she made them jump and whine. "How long am I to wait for them?"

Away they all ran, and soon returned with a pair of cocoa-nut slippers lined with leather, which they quickly slipped on their mistress's feet.

And now, farewell to all limping and shuffling; throwing her stick from her, she glided with the greatest velocity over the shining floors, dragging little Jacob by the hand. They arrived at last at a chamber, which, from the nature of the articles it contained, resembled a kitchen, although the tables which were of mahogany, and the sofas of the richest brocade, seemed more fitted for a state-room.

"Sit down," said the old woman, in a kind tone of voice, pushing him at the same time into a corner of the sofa, and drawing a table before him, as if to confine him there. "Sit down, for you have had a great load to carry: men's heads are not so light—not so light."

"What in the world do you mean, ma'am?" said the child. "It is true that I am tired; but it is with carrying the cabbages you bought of my mother to-day."

"Oh! you are mistaken," said the woman, drawing off the top of the basket, and taking thence a human head, which she held by the hair.

The boy was frightened out of his wits, and could not imagine how all this was to end; but he thought of his mother, and of the danger she would run if a report of her selling such articles were to get about.

"I must now pay you," said the old woman, "for you are a good boy. Wait patiently, and I will prepare you such a soup as you shall never forget all your life." With these words, she again sounded her whistle, on which there appeared, as at first, a troop of Guinea-pigs in their human habiliments, with the addition of cooking aprons, in the bands of which were stuck ladles and carving-knives. Following these, a crowd of little squirrels rushed into the room on their hind legs, wearing wide Turkish trousers, and little green velvet caps. They appeared to be the scullions, for they ran up the walls with the greatest velocity, bringing down the pots and dishes, eggs and butter, herbs and flour, and carrying them to the hearth. The old woman was also in a continual bustle, gliding here and there in her cocoa-nut slippers, and the child saw that she was fully determined to prepare him something very excellent. The fire now began to blaze higher and higher, the pot to smoke, and an agreeable odour to

fill the chamber. The old woman ran up and down, followed by the squirrels and Guinea-pigs, and every time that she passed the hearth, she poked her long nose into the pot. At last it began to bubble and hiss; the steam arose, and the froth flowed over into the fire. On this, it was taken off, and being poured into a silver bowl, was placed before little Jacob.

"Now my child," said she, "eat your soup, for you have before you the best that can be made. I will also teach you to be a clever cook, of which you are somewhat already; but herbs—such herbs as these you will never find. Why had your mother none of them in her basket?"

The child did not understand her, so he fell to eating his soup, which he found most excellent. His mother's cooking was very good; but anything so good as this he had never yet tasted. The fumes of the aromatic herbs and spices of the soup were at once sweet and sour, and very strong; and while the boy was draining the last drop of the costly liquid, the Guinea-pigs kindled some Arabian incense, which floating in thick blue clouds through the chamber, began to take effect on the senses of the child, who feeling himself becoming drowsy, vainly endeavoured to arouse himself, and to return to his mother, for after a few ineffectual efforts to rise, he sunk back on the old lady's sofa, and fell into a profound slumber.

The dreams which followed were of the most extraordinary description. It appeared to him, that the old woman, after undressing him, enveloped him in a squirrel's skin, on which he felt that he could spring and jump in the manner of those little animals, and accompanying them and the Guinea-pigs, who were all extremely agreeable, and well behaved. He felt that he had entered into the old woman's service. His first office was the care of the cocoa-nut slippers which she generally wore; these were to be smeared with oil, and then, by dint of rubbing, made to shine. As this was a sort of work he had been accustomed to at home, he made very light of it, and after a year's service at it, his work became of a more refined description; for instance, he was required to accompany the other squirrels when they went to collect the dust from the saw, and after obtaining enough, to sift it through a hair sieve.

This acquisition was of great consequence to the old woman, for having lost her teeth, she could no longer bite, and her food, therefore, consisted very much of a pottage made of bread and saw-dust.

When another year had elapsed, he was promoted to a place among those who collected the water which the old woman drank. Let not any one imagine that a cistern was dug, or a water barrel placed in the yard to catch the rain, as is usual in most families. Oh dear, no; her ideas were of a much more delicate nature. The squirrels, and Jacob with them, drew the dew from the roses in nut-shells for her beverage; and as the old lady was an immoderate drinker, they found it rather hard work. At the expiration of the third year, he was elevated to the rank of a house servant, and was expected to keep the floors, which were of glass, in an unsullied state of brightness. Now, as their polished surface showed the lightest puff of dust, he found this a most arduous service, and was obliged to attach brushes and cloths to his feet before he commenced his sliding operations about the chambers. After this year, he was installed into the kitchen; this was an honour only accorded to those who had undergone a long ordeal. Jacob served at first as a scullion, from which he gradually rose to the dignity of head pastry maker, and attained such a wonderful proficiency in all that he did in the cooking department, that he was often astonished at his own talents. He conquered the greatest difficulties in the art, and finally accomplished the making of pies containing two hundred different meats, and vegetable soups, composed of every plant that grows, mingled together. After passing what appeared in his dream to be seven years in the old woman's service, it happened one day that, putting off her cocoa slippers, and seizing her marketing basket and staff, she prepared for an expedition, desiring Jacob to have ready a nicely roasted young fowl against her return home. In doing this, he strictly adhered to the rules of his art; taking the fowl by the throat, he immersed it in boiling water, by which means the feathers came off more easily; then, after skinning it, that it might look sleek and shining, he drew it; after which he went to the herb room, to collect what he wanted for making an excellent stuffing. On entering this room, he perceived what had never before struck him—a half open closet in the wall. On a nearer approach, he saw several small baskets, from which a strong and agreeable smell emanated; and on opening one of these baskets, he discovered plants of a very singular shape and colour. The stalks and leaves were of a bluish green, and bore above them a small red flour edged with yellow. He examined these flowers, and smelt them, and there streamed out just such an odour as he had remarked in the first soup the old woman had prepared for

him; but the scent was of so strong a nature that it made him sneeze, and in sneezing, he awoke.

There he lay on the old lady's sofa, staring around him in dumb amazement. "How curious it is that our dreams should appear so real," said he to himself. "I could have sworn that I was a wretched little squirrel, a companion of Guinea-pigs and other such-like vermin; by which means, however, I have become a famous cook. How my mother will laugh when I relate it all to her! Though I am afraid she will scold me for going to sleep in a strange house, instead of returning to my place in the market." While thus reflecting, he recalled his scattered senses, and starting up to go away, he found his limbs stiff with sleep, as was also his neck, so that he was unable to turn his head on his shoulders. He could not help laughing at his own drowsy unsteadiness, for not a step did he take without knocking himself against the walls and closets, or running foul of the door-post. The squirrels and Guinea-pigs ran whining around him, as if unwilling that he should depart without them; and they accompanied him even to the outside of the threshold, for their low stature enabled them to do this; but they quickly ran back into the house in their walnut shells, and he for some time heard them howling at a distance.

On gaining the narrow street, he found great difficulty in deciding which way to proceed, particularly as there was so dense a crowd, that he thought he must be in the neighbourhood of some famous dwarf, as he heard on all sides "Look, look at the hideous dwarf! How comes the dwarf here? There's a long nose for you; and what a head stuck on a pair of shoulders! There's a pair of nasty brown hands!" At any other time he would have joined the crowd, for in nothing did he so much delight as the sight of giants, dwarfs, and outlandish, strangely dressed people; but he was now in too great a hurry to get to his mother.

It was in a state of great anxiety that he arrived at the market, where he found his mother sitting as usual beside her half-emptied basket, which, to his fancy, proved that he had not slept long. He was much struck by the appearance of sorrow which his mother wore. She no longer cried her goods, but leaned her head on her hand, and looked paler than usual. After hesitating for a few moments what to do, he took courage, and sliding behind her, and laying his hand affectionately on her arm, he asked her if she were angry with him. His mother

turned towards him, but starting back with a scream of horror, exclaimed—

"What do you want with me, you hideous dwarf? Be off, be off—such pranks do not suit me."

"But, dear mother," said Jacob, perfectly astounded," what is the matter? You are surely ill, or you would never drive your son from you."

"I have already told you to go your way," said dame Jane angrily. "You will get no money from me by your juggling."

"She must be gone mad," said the child to himself. "How shall I ever get her home? Dear mother, do look at me, and be reasonable: I am Jacob your son."

"Now this is really past a joke," said Jane to her companions of the market; "look at this frightful dwarf, is he not enough to drive away all my customers? and yet he has the cruelty to jest with my misfortune by declaring himself my son —my dear Jacob."

On hearing this, the people around with one accord began to abuse the poor boy, calling him by all those opprobrious epithets in which market women are known to deal so largely. They asked him how he could dare to revert to poor Jane's bereavement, whose lovely boy had been stolen from her seven years before; and they threatened to fall on him in a body, and tear him to pieces if he did not make off with himself.

Poor Jacob was utterly at a loss for an explanation of all this. It appeared to him that he had this very morning accompanied his mother to the market; had assisted her as usual in arranging her fruit baskets; had attended the old woman home, when, after eating a little soup, and refreshing himself with a short nap, he had now returned to his accustomed occupations. How hard then did it seem to be called a nasty dwarf, and to be talked to about things which happened seven years ago! What could have befallen him? When he saw that his mother would have nothing to do with him, he could not refrain from weeping, and he took his melancholy way towards the stall where his father was all day seated at his trade of cobbling shoes. "I will try," said he to himself, "if he will recognize me; and I will take my station under his doorway, and talk to him." The poor man was, however, so closely occupied, that he was not aware of the presence of a stranger; but when he did by chance cast a glance at the door, the shoes, the thread, and the awl fell from his hands, and he almost shrieked out, "What is that?"

"Good evening, master," said the boy, stepping into the shop. "How goes the world with you?"

"Badly, badly enough, my little sir," answered the cobbler, to Jacob's great astonishment; for he too seemed to consider him as a stranger. "My business is not very flourishing, and I am sadly lonely, and getting on in years; but I cannot afford to keep an apprentice."

"Have you then no son, who could assist you?" asked the lad.

"Once I had a son called Jacob, who by this time would have been a nice active lad of twenty years of age, and a great support to me; for at twelve years old he was already steady, and shewed a great aptitude for work. And he was so handsome and pleasant looking, that I should never have wanted for customers; and, instead of cobbling old leather, I should have worked upon nothing but new: but so goes the world!"

"Where then is your son?" asked Jacob, in a voice trembling with emotion.

"God only knows," answered his father. "Seven years ago—yes, just seven years ago, he was stolen from the market."

"Seven years ago!" repeated Jacob in amazement.

"Yes, my little master, just seven years ago. Well do I remember my wife returning home crying and sobbing because the child had been away from her the whole day, and was no where to be found. I had always foretold that it would be so; for it must be confessed that Jacob was a beautiful boy, and my wife was amazingly proud of him, and saw with delight that every one admired him when he was sent to the great houses with vegetables, and such like; on which occasions he generally got a present. 'This is all very well,' said I; 'but take care: the town is very large, and there are a great many wicked people in it: take care of Jacob.' And my words proved true; for a dreadful old woman came one day to the market, and after buying so much fruit and vegetables that she could not carry them home, she prevailed on my tender-hearted wife to lend her little Jacob to assist her, and from that hour to this we have never seen him."

"And you say that is seven years ago?"

"Seven years this very spring we had him cried, and we went from house to house to inquire for him. Our neighbours and friends who had known and loved the pretty child assisted us in the search, but all in vain. The woman whom he had accompanied was a stranger to every one; but a decrepit old

woman, of ninety years of age, said that she remembered having once seen the fairy HERBWISE, who was known to visit the city every fifty years, to purchase all sorts of things; and that it was very probably she who had carried off the child."

After this conversation, Jacob's father again fell to tapping his shoes, and drawing his thread in different directions. It now became more and more clear to Jacob, that far from having dreamt at all, he had *really* been seven years in the fairy's service, under the form of a squirrel. His heart was ready to burst with grief and indignation at the thought of the old witch's having stolen away from him seven of the best years of his life. And what had he received in exchange? A receipt for polishing cocoa-nut slippers, and for cleaning glass floors, and as profound a knowledge of cookery as squirrels and Guinea-pigs could give him. After remaining some time in meditation on his future fate, he was aroused by his father's asking him if there were anything in his way which it would please him to purchase: a pair of new slippers," said he, "or perhaps a nose case?"

"What is the matter with my nose?" said Jacob; "why should it want a case?"

"Why," said the cobbler, "that is according to taste; only I must say that if I had such a dreadfully ugly nose, I should be very much tempted to conceal it with a handsome red leather cover; look what a fine piece I have in hand, and I should want an ell at least. But however well you may be warned, young sir, I see clearly that you will be knocking yourself against every door post and carriage that comes in your way."

The boy was struck dumb with horror, and felt his nose, which was thick, and two hands long; so much had the old hag altered his face. No wonder that his mother had failed to recognize him, and had joined with her neighbours in calling him a hideous dwarf.

"Master," said he to the cobbler, while his voice was nearly inaudible from weeping, "have you a looking-glass in which I could see myself?"

"Young man," answered his father with great seriousness, "your appearance is not such as to render you vain; and under your present circumstances, it would not become you to be looking at yourself every hour of the day. Pray cast aside such thoughts, for in you it is most laughable."

"Let me but have a looking-glass," cried Jacob: "I assure you that my request is not from vanity."

"Do not worry me," replied the cobbler; "I am not worth a looking-glass: my wife has a small one which I know she has lent to some one, I know not whom. If you must look at yourself in the glass, go to Urban's the barber, over the way: he has one about twice the size of your head; go and enjoy the sight of yourself there, and a good morning to you."

So saying, the father pushed him quickly out of the shop, and locking the door after him, returned to his work. The boy in a sad and downcast mood crossed the street to Urban's the barber, whom he used to know very well in former days.

"Good morning, Urban," said he; "I am come to ask the favour of you to allow me the use of your looking-glass."

"With pleasure; there it is," said the barber, laughing, while the customer, whose beard he was shaving, joined heartily in his mirth; "you are a beauty truly, slight and elegant, with a neck like a swan's, hands like a queen's, and a nose such as seldom blesses one's sight. Your vanity to be sure is a little extraordinary, but pray indulge yourself with a peep into the glass, and let it not be said that through a mean jealousy I denied you the use of it."

Peals of laughter from the bystanders filled the little shop at this speech of the barber's. In the mean time Jacob had advanced to the looking-glass, and having taken a look at himself, felt his eyes overflowing with tears.

"Well might you, my dear mother, have failed to recognize your poor child," said he. "Alas! it was not so in those happy days, when you were proud to have him noticed by every body."

His eyes were shrunk to the size of a pig's; his nose was immense, and pending over his mouth and chin; and he seemed to have no neck whatever, for his head stuck fast in his shoulders, and it was with extreme pain that he turned to the right or left. His person had not grown from the age of twelve years; but he had increased in thickness, as if to make up for his deficiency in height. His chest and back each bulged out a different way, so that he wore the appearance of a well-filled sack. This disproportionate trunk was supported by two little weak legs, which seemed scarcely able to bear such a weight; but the arms which hung on each side of the body were suited to the stature of a tall well-grown man. The hands were coarse and yellow, with long spindle fingers, and if stretched out, could touch the ground without his stooping. Thus did little Jacob find himself transformed into a misshapen dwarf.

He thought of the day on which the old woman visited his

mother's fruit stall. All that he had shewed his dislike to in her person she had bestowed upon him, saving the long shaking neck, which in his case she had entirely taken away.

"Have you seen enough of yourself, my prince?" said the barber, advancing towards him with an air of derision. "Truly, of all the ridiculous dreams that man can dream, so comical a figure I think could never enter into them. But I have a proposal to make you, my little man. I have a very good trade it is true, but for some little time past I have fancied that it has somewhat decreased, and I ascribe it to this: My neighbour, barber Frith, has somewhere or other picked up a giant, which draws a great deal of business to his shop. Now there is no art in being a giant, but a little mannikin like you is quite a different affair. Enter into my service, and you shall have lodging, eating, drinking, clothes, and all other necessaries; for which you will only have to stand at the door every morning, and invite the people in, to prepare the soap suds, and hand the towel; and depend upon it, we shall both be gainers by this arrangement. I shall gain more custom than he of the giant; and you will receive a small fee from every one who enters."

Jacob felt extremely averse to engaging himself as a decoy-duck to a barber; but he bore the insult with patience, and answered with great civility, that he was not at liberty to enter into such a service, and took his leave. Cruelly as the old woman had changed his appearance, his mind remained as it had always been. He no longer thought of what he had been seven years before, for he felt himself to have become wiser and better for the time that had passed: he did not sorrow for his lost beauty, or his present hideousness; but to be driven from his father's door like a dog was a sore trial, and he resolved once more to endeavour to awaken his mother's recollection.

Accordingly he proceeded to the market, and entreating her to grant him a hearing, he reminded her of the events of that day on which he went away with the old woman; he recalled the incidents of his childhood, and then related to her how he had served the fairy for seven years under the form of a squirrel, and how she had changed him out of spite for the ridicule he had put upon her. The cobbler's wife hardly knew what to think; all that he had said agreed so exactly with the circumstances of his childhood; but when he arrived at the account of his service with the fairy as a squirrel, she declared it was impossible, that there were no such things as fairies, and that so

frightful a dwarf could never be her son; but she finally decided to speak on the subject to her husband, and packing up her baskets, and accompanied by Jacob, she hastened to the cobbler's stall.

"Now, only see," she said, "the creature that wants to pass himself off for our Jacob. He has told me a long story of how he was stolen from us seven years ago, and how he has been in a state of enchantment ever since."

"Capital!" said the cobbler in great anger; "so he has been telling you this long story has he? why, it is word for word what I related to him not an hour ago, and he goes now to impose upon you. You have been enchanted, have you, child? wait a bit, and I will enchant you a little more; so taking down a bundle of leather thongs which he had newly made, he sprang on the boy, and laid on so severely with the scourge upon his hump back and long arms, that he shrieked again with pain."

Few there are in any place compassionate enough to stand up in defence of an unfortunate, who may have anything ridiculous in his appearance; the poor dwarf was therefore without food or refreshment of any kind for the whole of that day, and at night he was reduced to the necessity of choosing his lodging on the cold hard steps of a church. When awakened by the early beams of the morning sun, he began to consider seriously in what manner to set about procuring the means of subsistence, abandoned as he was by both his parents.

His pride forbade his accepting the office of sign-post to a barber, nor would he hire himself out for money, to be seen as a buffoon; but he remembered that when a squirrel, he had made considerable progress in the art of cookery: he believed, and with reason, that he could vie with the most celebrated cooks of the age, and he resolved to turn his talents to some account. As soon as the people began to move in the streets, and the morning was sufficiently advanced, he entered a church to offer a prayer, and, after that, proceeded to put his project into execution. The Duke and lord of all that part of the country was a renowned epicure: his table was served in the most exquisite manner; and he sent for his cooks to all parts of the world. To his palace, therefore, Jacob bent his steps. When he arrived at the outer gate, the porter demanded his business, but not without indulging many a joke at his expense. On his demanding an audience with the clerk of the kitchen, they laughed still more, but conducted him through the court-yard, where, as soon as he appeared, redoubled peals of laughter filled the air from the

numbers of servants who were loitering about in all corners of the edifice. Grooms threw away their curry-combs to run and stare at him; the footmen quickly joined them; the beaters of carpets forgot their office; and as great a crowd collected as if the foul fiend himself had made his appearance, and the cry of "A dwarf, a dwarf! have you seen the dwarf?" sounded on all sides.

The house-steward now came forward from the door, with a countenance of great severity, and an awful-looking scourge in his hand. "In heaven's name, you hounds! what is all this noise? Know you not that the duke still sleeps?" continued he, letting fall his whip on the shoulders of the first grooms and porters he came up with.

"Oh, see," cried they, "do you not see? There is a dwarf here, the like of which was never seen."

The house-steward with difficulty restrained his laughter at the sight of Jacob; but the remembrance of the dignified office which he held quickly restored his composure. He drove the idlers to their respective work, and, conducting the boy to the house, asked him his business. When he understood that Jacob wished to speak to the clerk of the kitchen, he said, "My child, you are mistaken. Surely it is the house-steward whom you wish to see, to make interest for the place of domestic dwarf to my lord duke, is it not?"

"No, sir," answered Jacob. "I am a very skilful cook, and well versed in the fabrication of the rarest dishes. I wish to speak to the clerk of the kitchen, who, perhaps, might find me some employment."

"Every one to his taste, my little master; but I cannot but feel that you are inconsiderate in choosing the kitchen! Pshaw! As my lord's domestic dwarf, you would have nothing to do—you would be provided with eating and drinking, and fine clothes; but let us see to what degree your art extends, for my lord is in want of a master cook, and you are too good for a scullion." So saying he took him by the hand, and led him to the apartment of the clerk of the kitchen.

"Worthy sir," said the dwarf, with so low a bow that his nose nearly swept the carpet, "are you in want of a clever cook?"

The clerk of the kitchen eyed him from head to foot, and, bursting into a loud laugh, exclaimed, "Think you that our hearths are so low that you could reach them even on tip-toes, and your neck stretched as far as it will go? My good child, whoever sent you to me has made a great fool of you." So

saying, the great man laughed loud and long, in which he was joined by all those who happened to be present.

The dwarf, however, was not disconcerted. "What matters an egg or two, a little wine and syrup, flour and spices, in a house where plenty abounds?" said he. "Order any dish you please, and furnish me with what I demand, and it shall be done under your own eyes, and you shall own me a cook indeed."

While thus reasoning, it was extraordinary to see his little eyes flashing with excitement, his long nose waving from side to side, and his spindle fingers all in action.

"Well," said the clerk of the kitchen (taking the house-steward under the arm), "this will be fine sport, let us go to the kitchen," and, after passing through many halls and passages, at the kitchen they arrived—a large wide building, superbly fitted up, according to the purpose for which it was intended. On twenty hearths blazed as many fires. Clear water, as if for preserving fish, flowed through the apartment, and marble slabs, and costly wooden shelves, and closets, contained those articles which it was necessary to keep always at hand; and on the right and left hand were ten store rooms, in which were kept all those rare productions of foreign nations, which could conduce to the indulgence of the palate. Kitchen servants of all descriptions were running here and there, and, on their first entrance, the clattering of pans and kettles, and spoons and ladles, was immense; but the moment the clerk of the kitchen made his appearance, all became silent as death, if we except the crackling of the fire and the purling of the stream.

"What has my lord ordered for his breakfast, this morning?" asked the purveyor of the household of the head breakfast-maker, an old cook.

"Sir, he has ordered Danish soup and red Hamburg dumplings."

"Good," said the clerk of the kitchen. "You have now heard," said he, addressing himself to Jacob, "what our master desires. Do you imagine that you can make those dishes? Of course you cannot make the dumplings, for the ingredients of those is a secret."

"There is nothing easier," said the dwarf (to the astonishment of all who heard him, for he had often made these very dishes, under the form of a squirrel), "nothing easier. Give me, for the soup, such and such herbs, such and such spices, wild boar fat, roots, and eggs; and for the dumplings," said he, in an under tone, so that none but the clerk of the kitchen and

the house-steward could hear, "I must have all sorts of meat, wine, duck's grease, ginger, and a certain herb called stomach-hope."

"Ha! by Saint Benedict, by what enchantment have you learnt all this?" cried the astounded cook. "He has repeated the list of the ingredients to a hair; but for the herb *stomach-hope*, I never heard of it myself; that must indeed add very much to the relish of it. What a wonderful cook!"

"Well, I should never have thought it," said the clerk of the kitchen: "however, let him have a trial; give him the things he wants, vessels and every thing else, and let him prepare the breakfast."

It was done as he ordered, and all that was desired by Jacob was collected on the stove; but it was found that the poor dwarf could not reach up to them even with his nose. Two stools were accordingly placed together, and on those was laid a slab of marble, upon which the little fellow was lifted to begin his operations. The cooks formed a circle round him, and beyond them stood a crowd of servants and others, who could not fail to be astonished at the ease and dexterity with which he handled the ingredients for his dishes, and the order and neatness with which he arranged them. As soon as he had made his preparations for both dishes, he ordered them to be put on the fire and strictly watched until such time as he should give a signal, and beginning to count one, two, three, until he had reached the sum of five hundred, he suddenly called out "Halt!" and the lids being taken off, he requested the opinion of the head cook as to their merits.

Taking a golden spoon from the hands of a scullion, which he had previously washed in the brook, the head cook presented it to the clerk of the kitchen, who, advancing with a solemn step towards the stove, took of the dish, tasted it, and closing his eyes, in a kind of rapture, exclaimed, while he smacked his lips, "Excellent! by the life of the grand duke, most excellent! Will you not also taste it, steward?" The latter, with a bow, accepted the spoon, tasted in his turn, and became positively frantic with delight.

"I have the greatest respect for your cooking, my dear breakfast maker, but never did you make such soup or such Hamburg dumplings as these."

The turn now came of the cook himself, who testified his approbation by shaking the dwarf's hand with great respect. He exclaimed, "Little one, you are a master genius in cookery; and as for the *stomach-comfort*, it bestows a most peculiar zest."

At this moment, the duke's attendant entered the kitchen, and announced that his master desired his breakfast. The meats were accordingly turned out on silver plates, and served up to the duke's table, while the clerk of the kitchen conducted Jacob to his apartment; but hardly had they been there time enough for a man to repeat a paternoster (which you must know, my Lord Sheik, is the Franks' prayer, and a very much shorter one than that of the followers of Mahomet), when an order arrived for the immediate attendance of the steward in the chamber of his master. Quickly arranging himself in his state dress, he followed the messenger. The duke was in high good humour. All that had been served up to his table had vanished, and he was wiping his beard as the clerk of the kitchen entered.

"Listen," said he: "I have always been pleased with your cooking up to this time; but tell me who it was that prepared my breakfast this morning, for any thing so exquisite I never tasted since I sat on the throne of my father. Tell me the name of the cook, that I may have the pleasure of rewarding him."

"My lord, there is a wonderful history attached to this," answered the clerk of the kitchen; and he then related how that, early in the morning, a dwarf had visited the palace to offer himself as a cook, and that his services having been made trial of, the dishes in question had been the result.

The duke, in a state of great astonishment, ordered the dwarf to be summoned before him; and he then demanded who he was, and whence he came. Poor Jacob felt himself unable to relate the particulars of his story, how he had been enchanted and transformed into a squirrel; but in his relation he stuck as nearly as possible to truth, in asserting that he was without father or mother, and that he had learned cooking of an old woman. The duke asked no further questions, but diverted himself with the extraordinary appearance of his new cook.

"If you remain with me," said he, "I will give you fifty ducats per annum, a holiday dress, and two pair of handsome trousers besides. For this you must prepare my breakfast every day, direct the arrangement of the dinner, and take the sole responsibility of the kitchen. As every person in my household receives a name from me, on his entrance into my service, I shall call you Nosey, and at once invest you with the office of second cook."

The dwarf here threw himself at the feet of this the most powerful prince of the country, and kissing them, promised the greatest exactness and fidelity.

Thus was the poor boy at once provided for, and he was also a credit to the art he professed; for it was remarked by every one, that the duke was quite another man during the time the dwarf Nosey remained in his service. He had frequently before that time been known to throw the plates and dishes from his table at the cooks' heads; nay, the very head cook himself had been knocked down and confined to his bed for three days, from a blow that he had received from a baked calf's-foot, that had not been made sufficiently tender. It is true, indeed, that the duke made up for these outbreaks, by handsful of ducats, which he freely distributed to the injured parties; but still he had not a cook who did not quake for fear of him. Since the arrival of the dwarf, all had gone on as if by enchantment. Instead of three meals a day, the duke now indulged in five, as if to luxuriate in the productions of his little cook's talents; never was a look of impatience to be seen on his countenance; all was new, all was excellent; his behaviour became more courteous, and he grew fatter every day.

He was fond of sending for his head cook and for Nosey during his repast, and, seating them, the one on his right and the other on his left hand, he would himself help them from the delicious dish before him—an honour which they both knew perfectly well how to appreciate.

Nosey was the wonder of the town, and the head cook was often requested to allow persons to see the dwarf at his operations; and many people of consequence carried it so far, as to solicit the duke to permit their servants to take lessons in his kitchen. This yielded a small profit, for each pupil paid daily half-a-ducat; and, as the other cooks had been good-natured, and had shown themselves free from jealousy, Nosey presented them with the money which he had received from the masters of the stranger cooks.

Two years of the boy's life thus passed away in comfort and respectability, without leaving him any thing to regret but the remembrance of his parents' estrangement. Nothing remarkable during the whole of this time took place, until one day the following incident occurred. Being particularly clever and fortunate in his marketings, he always endeavoured to find time to go himself for the purchase of poultry and fruit. One morning he took his way through the poultry market in search of some fine heavy geese, such as he knew his master liked. He walked up and down several times during the investigation, and his appearance, which formerly excited but laughter and mockery,

was now held in such respect, from the situation he occupied, that not a poultry-woman but conceived herself honoured if he but turned his nose towards her.

At the end of a row of market women, he remarked one who sat quite in the corner, and who had also geese to sell. She did not cry her goods or praise them, for which very reason he advanced towards her and examined her geese, which, in measure and weight, were exactly such as he wanted; so buying three of them, together with their pen, he threw it over his broad shoulders, and returned towards home. To his great surprise, however, he found that two only of the geese cackled and screamed, and conducted themselves in such a manner as geese generally do—the third sitting quite still, and sighing as deeply and with as much feeling as a human being.

"This one is sick," said Nosey; "I must make haste to kill and dress it."

But the goose, speaking quite distinctly and loud, said—

"If me you kill,
I'll do you ill;
But if you me from slaughter save,
I'll keep you from an early grave."

Startled beyond measure, Nosey set down his burden, when the goose's fine sensible eyes became fixed upon his face, while it again sighed deeply.

"So! so! Mr. Goose, you can speak, can you?" said Nosey. "I should never have expected that; but make yourself easy, no one will hurt you, nor give up so rare a bird for the spit; but I would wager a good deal that you have not always been in your present form. I myself was once a poor little squirrel."

"You are right," said the goose, "in thinking that I was not born in this disgraceful shape. Alas! who could have foreseen, when I lay in my cradle, that Mimi, the great Wetterbock's daughter, would meet her death in the duke's kitchen."

"Do not alarm yourself, dear Miss Mimi, for, by the honour of the duke's second cook, no one shall touch so much as one of your feathers. I will fit you up a pen in my own apartment, you shall have plenty to eat, and all my leisure time will I devote to your society. I shall tell the other servants that I am fattening a goose in a particular manner for the duke's table, and, as soon as I can find an opportunity, I will set you at liberty."

The goose thanked him with tears, and he strictly kept his word to her. After killing the other two geese, he prepared a

pen for Mimi, under the pretence that she was for the duke's own table. Not, however, with common food did he feed her, but plentifully supplied her with pastry and sweets. Every moment of his leisure he spent in conversing with and consoling her. They related their mutual adventures, and Nosey thus learned that the goose was the daughter of the enchanter Wetterbock, who resided in the Isle of Gothland; he had quarrelled with an old fairy who, through intrigue and artifice, had overreached him; and she had wreaked her vengeance on Mimi by changing her into a goose, and had brought her all this way from her home. When Nosey had likewise related his history, Mimi thus spoke:—

"I am not unskilled in these affairs, for my father gave me and my sister as great an insight into his art as he dared to communicate. The account of your quarrel at the herb-market, your sudden transformation on smelling those particular herbs you mention, and some of the old woman's expressions which you have repeated to me, all serve to convince me that you are under the enchantment of plants, and that whenever you are able to find the herb on which the fairy thought when she put her spell upon you, you will recover your natural form."

The hope which this discovery awakened in poor Nosey's breast was quickly damped by the reflection of the impossibility of finding this rare plant of fairy-land. He, nevertheless, returned his thanks to Mimi for the encouragement she had given him to hope.

About this time there arrived a neighbouring prince, on a visit to the duke, who, sending for his dwarf Nosey, thus addressed him:—

"The time is now arrived for shewing whether you are, indeed, the faithful servant and the master of your art which you profess yourself to be. This prince, who is now my guest, is considered to be (after myself) the best judge of good eating and good cooks; in short, his learning is most profound. Manage, therefore, in such a manner that my table shall be daily served so as to astonish him; do not presume to offer us the same things twice while he is with me. Ask of my treasurer what you will, for should you require gold and diamonds to fry in butter, you shall have it. I would rather be reduced to poverty than have reason to blush before my friend."

Thus spoke the duke, and the dwarf with a bow replied that it should be done as he desired.

The little cook now summoned up all his energies—he spared

neither his lord's treasure nor his own trouble, for his days were passed in a cloud of fire and smoke, and his voice sounded continually through the fumes of the kitchen, over which he had now entire control.

My lord, I might lengthen out my story as do the camel-drivers of Aleppo, when, in the tales which they relate to travellers, they describe the luxurious fare of which the persons in the story are made to partake. They extend the relation for whole hours together, the effect of which is to excite so great a desire to eat in their hearers, that they involuntarily unpack their provisions, and invite the camel-driver to partake of their repast—but I refrain. The stranger prince had already remained a fortnight at the duke's court, and the time appeared to have passed most agreeably. In the five meals per day of which the princes partook, the dwarf's cooking seemed to have given his master the utmost satisfaction, particularly as he saw that his friend was equally pleased. On the 15th day of the prince's visit, the duke summoned his cook, and presenting him to the prince, asked him how he liked his performance of the culinary art.

"You are an astonishing cook," answered the prince, "and you perfectly understand what good eating consists in. You have never, during the whole time of my visit here, repeated a single dish, and all has been excellently well done. One thing alone surprises me; it is, that you should never have given us the queen of dishes—the '*pastete souzeraine.*'"

At the sound of this dish the dwarf became seriously alarmed, for he had never even heard of it; he, however, recovered himself, and answered:—

"My lord, I delayed the making of this dish, as I wished to present it at my master's table on the day of your departure; and I hoped that you would shed the light of your countenance on this household for some time longer."

"And I suppose," said the duke laughing, "that you meant to keep it for the day of my final departure from this world, for never yet have you given it to me; now, however, rack your brains for some other leave-taking dish; to-morrow this said pie must be on my table."

"Your commands shall be obeyed, my lord," answered the dwarf, as he left the room. His heart, however, was anything but light, and he sought his chamber, under the impression that the day of his shame and disgrace was arrived. The very thought of undertaking to make a pie of which he had never heard, caused his tears to flow.

The goose, who was permitted to walk at large in his apartment, now approached, and demanded the cause of his grief. "If that be all," said she, on hearing the circumstances, "I have the means of consoling you, for the 'pastete souzeraine' was a favourite dish at my father's table, and I am acquainted with all the ingredients which compose it. Take so much of such and such a thing; and if perchance something is left out, the princes will surely not detect it."

The speech of Mimi caused poor Nosey to jump for joy. He blessed the day that he had bought her, and hastened to commence making preparations for manufacturing this pasty. In the first instance he made a small one as a trial, which he found excellent, and, on submitting it to the judgment of the clerk of the kitchen, he was again extolled by him as the first of cooks. On the following day the pie was served of a larger size, warm from the oven, and ornamented with a garland of flowers. Nosey himself, arranged in holiday garb, shortly followed his handiwork into the dining-room, where he found the head carver employed in dividing the pasty, and serving it in silver-spoons to the duke and his guest.

The former, who was eating most voraciously, raised his eyes in ecstacy to the ceiling, and, after swallowing a portion more, exclaimed, "Ha! this is, indeed, rightly named the queen of pies, and my dwarf is certainly the king of cooks. Is it not so, my dear friend?"

The guest, after tasting several small pieces and dwelling with attention on each, smiled with a look of contempt and mystery, saying, at the same time, "Good as this is, it still wants something of the taste of the 'sovereign pasty;' but I thought how it would be.

The duke knit his brows, and flushed with shame. "Hound of a dwarf," cried he, "how could you presume to send such a dish up to your master's table? Shall I have your great head struck off and baked, as a punishment for your wretched cookery?"

"For heaven's sake, my gracious lord, hear me. The dish was prepared according to the rules of art, and I know not what can be wanting to it," replied the poor trembling dwarf.

"You lie, fellow," returned the duke, spurning him from him with his foot. "My guest would not have found a fault if there had been none. I will have you yourself made into a pie."

"Have pity on me," said the little fellow, throwing himself

on his knees before the prince, and holding fast by his feet, "tell me what is wanting to this dish."

"My good Nosey," said the prince laughing, "it would be of little service to you to be told—and, for that reason, I felt assured yesterday that you would never equal my cook in the fabrication of this dish—for know that it is a certain herb called *Niessmitlust*, and of which the inhabitants of this country are entirely ignorant, that gives the peculiar relish, which I am sure your master will think as indispensable as I do."

The sovereign of Frankistan now fell into a violent rage. "And which I must insist upon having added," said he, while his eyes flashed fire, "for I swear, by the honour of a prince, either to set before you the much-desired delicacy, or to have the head of this booby placed over the gates of my palace. Go, dog; once more I grant thee twenty-four hours to save thy life in."

At these words of the duke, the dwarf retired to his chamber in still greater grief than on the preceding day, for his fate appeared to be decided, as he had no likelihood of finding the herb in question.

The goose, having been informed of the cause of his lamentations, assured him that she could speedily assist him out of his present difficulties, for that her father had instructed her in the science of plants. "At another time," said she, "I could not, perhaps, have saved you; but it is now, fortunately, the season of full moon, at which time only does the plant bloom. But tell me, do you know of any old chestnut-trees hereabouts?"

"O yes," cried Nosey joyfully; "on the edge of the lake, not a hundred steps from the house, there is a group of them—but why?"

"The plant we are in want of always grows at the foot of those trees," returned the goose, "so let us not lose any time in seeking for it. Take me on your arm, and put me down to go where I will, and I doubt not I shall quickly find it."

This business arranged, he issued from the palace-door, and was much surprised by finding the porter's staff placed across it to forbid their egress. The porter informed him that he had received the strictest orders for his confinement to the house.

"But can I not go into the garden?" asked the dwarf. "Be so good as to send some one to the house-steward, with a request that I may go to collect such herbs as I require."

The porter charged himself with this commission, and re-

turned with a favourable answer; for, as the garden walls were high and without any outlet, no escape was apprehended.

As soon as Nosey and Mimi found themselves in the open air, he placed her on the ground, when she quickly made off for the lake where the chestnut-trees grew. Nosey quickly followed with a beating heart, for this was his last and only hope, as he was firmly resolved, in case of a failure with respect to the plant, to perish in the lake rather than fall under the hand of the executioner. The goose made the most assiduous search under the chestnut-trees, and turned up every blade of grass with her beak, but in vain; so that, for very pity and despair, she began to weep. The evening was drawing to a close, and the surrounding objects became involved in a deeper gloom.

It was then that, on glancing towards the opposite side of the lake, the dwarf exclaimed—

"Look, look yonder, on the other side; there is still a larger, older chestnut-tree: let us go thither, and decide my destiny."

The goose, raising herself in the air, flew to the spot he pointed to, while Nosey ran as fast as his dwarfish legs would carry him. The tree cast a deep shadow, and it was already so dark that very little could be distinguished; however, the goose suddenly stopped, clapped her wings for joy, and plunging her head into the long grass, drew out something, which she presented with the utmost grace to Nosey, saying—

"This is the plant we are in quest of; and there is so much of it growing here, that you never need be at a loss for it."

The dwarf examined it nearer, and a sweet odour streamed upwards from its leaves, and involuntarily reminded him of the scene of his transformation. The stalks and leaves were of a bluish green; and it bore a flame-coloured flower, edged with yellow.

"Heaven be praised!" exclaimed he at last, "what a mirade! I believe this to be the very same plant which changed me from a squirrel into the disgraceful object which I now am. Shall I make the trial?"

"Not yet," said the goose. "Take a handful of this plant home with you. Let us return to your room, and after collecting your money and all that you possess together, we will try the virtues of the plant."

This advice being followed, they returned to the palace, the heart of the dwarf beating audibly from agitation; and having made up a bundle of clothes, shoes, &c., and some fifty or sixty ducats which he had saved, he exclaimed—

"May it please Heaven to ease me of this burden!" And as he snuffed up the scent of the wonderful herb, he became quickly aware of the change that was taking place in his outward form.

His limbs began to crack and extend themselves; his head arose from between his shoulders; and looking down at his nose, he perceived it becoming smaller and smaller; his back and his chest became flatter, and his legs grew longer.

The goose observed all this with extreme surprise.

"Why, how tall and handsome you are!" said she. "Heaven be praised, you have lost all semblance of your former self."

Jacob was indeed rejoiced at the alteration of his figure; he clasped his hands in gratitude, and he did not forget what he owed to Mimi. His heart strongly inclined him to see his parents immediately; but he stifled the selfish wish for her sake, exclaiming—

"Whom have I to thank but you for the restoration of my form? I should never have found the plant without your assistance, and should either have remained the hideous being that I was, or fallen by the axe of the executioner. I will now, in recompence, take you direct to your father, who, if he be so famous an enchanter, will quickly restore you to yourself."

The goose on this melted into tears, and poured forth the most heartfelt thanks. Jacob passed most fortunately with Mimi, unrecognized through the palace gates, took the road to the sea shore, and after a prosperous voyage, arrived at Mimi's home.

What have I further to relate, than that Wetterbock, after disenchanting his daughter, loaded her preserver with presents, who returned to his native town. His parents quickly acknowledged their son in the handsome young man before them, who, with the treasures he had brought from Wetterbock, was enabled to set up a shop, in which he proved fortunate and respectable.

I must, however, relate that his departure from the palace threw everything into a state of disorder, for that when the duke prepared to carry his menace into execution, of cutting off poor Nosey's head unless the plant was produced, he was nowhere to be found. The prince asserted that he had had him secretly conveyed away, lest he should be deprived of his best cook, and complained loudly of his want of faith. From this, a fierce war arose between them, long known in history, as the *War of Plants*. Many battles were fought in the cause, but peace at

last was concluded, which bore the name of the *Pie Peace*, because, at the feast given in honour of the reconciliation, the prince's cook served up this queen of *pies*, of which the duke partook with considerable satisfaction.

Thus do great events await on small causes; and this, my lord, is the History of the Dwarf Nosey.

So ended the European slave's story, to whom, as well as to the other slaves, the Sheik ordered fruits to be distributed, while he himself conversed with his friends. The young men who had been conducted to the hall by their venerable friend, were in the highest admiration at the Sheik, his house, and all its regulations.

"Really," said the young scribe, "there is no pleasure equal to listening to tales. I could pass whole days in such pastime, with my legs crossed under me, one arm resting on a cushion and supporting my head, and in the other, the Sheik's hookah, while my mind was amused with histories of all kinds. Such a life must almost equal that of the garden of Mahomet."

"As long as you are young, and can work," said the old man, "you cannot be serious in expressing such an indolent wish; but I confess with you, that there is great pleasure in listening to a clever tale. Old as I am (and I am approaching my seventy-seventh year), and many as have been the stories I have listened to, I am not ashamed still to form one of a circle of auditors, which collects round a professed story-teller. One fancies oneself a party in the adventures related; and one lives with those men, those wonderful spirits—fairies and such like, who are not to be met with every day; and then, when we are alone, we have somewhat to think over, like the wanderer in the desert, who enlivens the waste by imagining it possessed of the beauties he has traversed before entering it.

"I never gave much thought as to wherein consisted the charm of such relations, but I feel with you. When I was an impetuous child, nothing could tame me like a story. It mattered little to me what it treated of, as long as something was told. How often have I, untired, listened to those fables in which the wise men who wrote them have let fall some of the sparks of their transcendant genius—such as 'The Fox and foolish Raven,

'The Fox and the Wolf,' with dozens of stories about lions and other beasts. As I grew older, and mixed more in society, I was no longer satisfied with such short narrations. Something more was wanting to please me; glories which should treat of men, and of their wonderful adventures."

"Ah! well do I remember that time," added another of the group. "You were the first who inspired us with the wish to hear these stories. One of your slaves was as clever in this art as any camel driver between Mecca and Medina. As soon as his work was over, he took his seat amongst us on the lawn before the house, where we tormented him, first to begin, and then to continue his stories until nightfall.

"Which discovered to us, a new and unknown region," replied the scribe; "the land of genii and fairies, embellished with all the wonders of the world of plants, with rich palaces of emeralds and rubies, peopled with gigantic slaves, who appear and disappear upon the turning of a ring, or the rubbing of a lamp, or at the pronouncing of the word *salomo*, bring costly viands on golden dishes. We felt ourselves involuntarily transported into distant lands—accompanied Sinbad on his wonderful voyages, and Haroun Alraschid, the wise monarch of the faithful, in his walks about the city. We knew Giaffer, his vizier, as intimately as we know ourselves; and in short, lived in these narrations as one lives in dreams. The evening hour was to us the most delightful of the twenty-four, when seated on the grass-plot, and thus engaged; but tell us, old man, how is it that the thing which formerly pleased us so much is precisely that which we enjoy the most at the present time?"

The stir which arose in the chamber, and the call to attention given by the overseer of the slaves, prevented a reply to the question. The youths hardly knew whether most to rejoice at the promise of a new story, or to regret the interruption given to their conversation with the old man. The second slave, however, began as follows—

The History of Abner the Jew,

WHO HAD SEEN NOTHING.

SIR, I am a native of Mogador, on the borders of the great sea; and as the following circumstances took place during the reign of the most mighty emperor, Muley Ismael, monarch of Fez and Morocco, you may perhaps not dislike to hear the tale. It is the history of Abner the Jew, who had seen nothing.

Jews, as you know, are everywhere; and everywhere there are Jews: their falcon eyes spy out wherever an advantage is to be gained; and the more oppressed they are, the more cunning they become, while they glory in this very cunning. That a Jew, however, may sometime fall into disgrace owing to this very quality, witness Abner, as he one evening took his way through the Morocco gate.

He strode along, wearing his pointed cap, and his shabby and not over clean mantle on his shoulders, stealing, from time to time, a pinch from the golden snuff-box which he did not wish to have seen, or stroking his beard. Content this evening shone out upon his unsettled countenance, notwithstanding the expression of fear and apprehension which generally twinkled in his rolling eyes. He must certainly have made some good bargain to-day.

His walk had led him to a little grove of dates and palm-trees, when he heard behind him an immense outcry, caused by a crowd of the emperor's stable-servants, led by the head groom; whose glances, cast eagerly on each side as they went along, indicated that they were in search of something.

"Philistine," cried the head groom, panting with fatigue, "have you not seen a blood-horse fully caparisoned pass by?"

Abner answered, "The fastest goer in the world, slender and small is his hoof, his shoes of burnished silver, and his coat shining like the great sabbath candle-stick, fifteen hands high, his tail three feet and a half long, and his bit of the purest gold?"

"It is he," shouted the head groom.

"It is he," echoed the stable men.

"It is the Emir," said the riding-master. "I have told Prince Abdallah more than ten times, that he ought to ride in a snaffle. I know Emir well. I foretold that he would throw him; so if my head is to answer for his backache, I have foretold what would happen. But quick, quick; which way is he gone?"

"I have seen no horse," said Abner, smiling. "How should I know which way the Emperor's horse has gone?"

Astonished at such an apparent contradiction, the gentlemen of the stable were thinking what means to adopt to compel Abner to speak more clearly, when a new occurrence gave a different turn to affairs. By one of those extraordinary chances which sometimes occur, the Empress's lap-dog was missing. A troop of black slaves now made their appearance, and while still far off, called out—

"Have you seen the Empress's lap-dog?"

"A female, gentlemen?" inquired Abner.

"Exactly so," replied the eunuch, in the greatest joy. "Aline, where art thou?"

"A small setter dog," continued Abner, "long hanging ears, a feathery tail, and limps on her right fore-leg."

"It is her very self," cried the chorus of blacks; "it is Aline. The Empress fell into convulsions, when she could not be found. What would become of us if we were to return to the harem without her? Speak quickly; which way did she run?"

"I have seen no dog, nor did I know that the Empress, whom God preserve! possessed a setter."

The people of the stable and of the harem now became furious at what they called Abner's impudence in joking about anything which belonged to the Emperor, nor did they for a moment doubt that, unlikely as it was, he had stolen both dog and horse. While the underlings pursued the search, the head groom and the eunuch seized the Jew, and led the half cunning, half frightened joker, into the presence of Muley Ismael, who, when he had heard the circumstances of the case, summoned

the usual council, and presided himself at its decision. On the opening of the case, fifty bastinadoes were commanded to be applied to the feet of the accused. In vain did he scream, whimper, and protest his innocence, offering to relate everything as it befell. In vain did he quote passages from the Talmud, such as, "The displeasure of the king is as the roaring of a young lion; but his favour is as the dew on the grass." "Let not thy hand strike, while thine eyes and thine ears are shut." Muley Ismael made a signal, and swore by the beard of the Prophet and of his own, that Abner's head should pay for the Empress's convulsions and the Prince's pains, if the stray animals were not recovered.

The palace still resounded with the cries of the sufferer, when the news arrived that the horse and dog were both found. Aline was surprised in the society of some pug-dogs, respectable enough in themselves, but far from fitting associates for such a high-born court lady as she was; and Emir, after he had run himself tired, found the sweet-smelling grass on the bank of the brook Tara, much more to his taste than the oats of the imperial stable; as the princely huntsman, when wearied and lost in the chase, forgets the dainties of his own table while he relishes the black bread and fresh butter of the cottager.

Muley Ismael now demanded of Abner an explanation of his behaviour; when he found the opportunity of vindicating himself (though late) in the following words, after he had three times touched the ground before his highness' throne with his forehead—

"Most mighty Emperor, king of kings, lord of the west, star of justice, mirror of truth, abyss of wisdom, shining as gold, luminous as the diamond, hard as iron! hear me. Now that it is permitted to thy slave to raise his voice in the presence of thy beaming countenance, I most solemnly aver, that I saw neither your sacred horse, nor the engaging dog of my gracious Empress, with the eyes of my body; but listen to the circumstances of the case.

"Refreshing myself after the fatigue and labour of the day, with an evening walk in the little wood where I had the honour of meeting his honour the head groom, and his vigilance the black overseer of thy sacred harem, I perceived, in the fine sand between the palm-trees, the track of an animal; and I, who am pretty well versed in the ways of animals, quickly distinguished it as the footmarks of a little dog. Other marks in the sand convinced me that it was a female who had passed,

and that she had long hanging ears; in some places the sand was still more disturbed, which convinced me that she must have a beautiful feathery tail, with which it had pleased her to lash the sand about; neither did it escape me that one of her feet had pressed less heavily on the sand than the other three, from which I concluded that (if such a word may be permitted) the dog of my most gracious Empress *limped*.

"With respect to your highness's horse, know that, as I wandered along a path of the grove, I observed the track of a horse, of which the noble hoof, the fine, yet strong frog, convinced me, that he was of the Tehennee breed, the noblest of all. It is hardly four months since my lord, the Emperor, purchased two of this same breed from a European prince; and my brother Reuben was present at the conclusion of the bargain by which my gracious master gained so much. When I observed how far apart, and how exactly alike, the tracks of his steps were, I thought to myself, This animal gallops quickly, and is thoroughbred; he is only fit for my lord, the Emperor. The war-horse of which Job speaks then came into my mind, "He paweth in the valley, and rejoiceth in his strength: he goeth on to meet the armed men: he mocketh at fear, and is not affrighted; neither turneth he his back from the sword. The quiver rattleth against him, and the glittering spear and shield." Seeing something shining on the ground, I bent down as I always do on such occcasions, and picked up a piece of marble, on which the shoe of the impatient steed had left a mark; from which I concluded that it must be of silver, for well I know the different marks that metals leave, and can judge of its genuineness. The pathway I was traversing was seven feet wide, and I perceived that here and there the dust of the palm-trees was driven aside by something that had passed. In fact, the animal had fanned it aside with his tail; and therefore, thinks I, the tail must be three feet and a half long. Under the trees, the foliage of which began to grow about five feet from the ground, fresh leaves were strewed; this must have been done by his hastiness's back, said I, and this proves him to be fifteen hands high; and some small tufts of golden hair convinced me that his colour must be a yellow dun. On emerging from the bushes, my eye was struck by a line of gold on the rock before me. It appeared that the rock contained a touchstone, and the line of gold was finer than that of the little man with the bundle of arrows on the gold coin of the seven united provinces. This stroke must have been

made by the bit of the flying steed as he rubbed by this rock. As every one knows your splendid taste, oh King of kings! and that the meanest horse in your stable bears a golden bit, I—"

"Now, by Mecca and Medina," cried Muley Ismael, "that is what I call having eyes. Such eyes as those would do you no harm, master of the hounds, they would save you a couple of blood-hounds; and you, minister of police, would see further with them than all your scouts and bailiffs. Now, Jew, in consideration of your uncommon acuteness, the fifty lashes which you received are worth fifty sequins, which they have saved you, for we now demand but fifty; draw out your purse, and abstain for the future from any jest concerning us or our possessions; and continue still to enjoy our favour."

The whole court were of course in great admiration at Abner's sagacity, for his majesty had declared him to be a clever fellow, but all this did not repay him for his sufferings, or console him for the loss of his beloved sequins. It was with sighs and groans that he counted them out, one after another, weighing them as they passed through his spindle fingers. Meanwhile Schunri, the Emperor's jester, continued to laugh at him, and to ask him whether all his sequins had been tried by the same touchstone at which the dun horse of Prince Abdallah had tried his bit.

"Your wisdom has gained honour," said he, "but I would bet fifty sequins that you would rather have been without it. What says the Prophet?—'An inconsiderate word will not overtake a carriage, even when harnessed by four fleet horses; nor will it catch a dog, Mr. Abner, even when not lame.'"

A short time after this unfortunate adventure of Abner's, he took another walk in one of the green valleys of the Atlas. His meditations were again disturbed by the arrival of a crowd of soldiers, the leader of which called to him to inquire if he had seen Goro, the black eunuch of the emperor's guard, pass. "He has taken flight," said he, "and must have passed by here in his way to the mountains."

"I cannot assist you, general," said Abner.

"Ha! are you not the crafty Jew who neither saw the horse nor the dog? The slave must have passed this very spot. Don't you scent him in the gale, nor see the traces of his feet in the long grass? Speak, for it must be so. He is alone on a sparrow-shooting expedition with his rifle, and this is his majesty's favourite diversion. Speak, or I will order you into chains."

"Can I say that I have seen what I have not seen?"

"Now, Jew, for the last time, in which direction did the slave run? Remember your lashes—remember your sequins."

"Woe is me! But if you will have it that I have seen this sparrow-shooter, he ran in there, but, as he is no longer there, he is somewhere else."

"Then you have seen him?" roared out one of the soldiers.

"Certainly, sir officer, if such be your pleasure."

The soldiers took the direction pointed out to them, and Abner returned to his home, glorying in his deceit; but hardly had he been twenty-four hours within the shelter of his own roof, when a company of the palace-guard invaded it (thus profaning his sabbath) and dragged him into the presence of the Emperor of Morocco.

"Hound of a Jew!" snorted the Emperor, "dare you thus treat the imperial servants in pursuit of a fugitive slave, by sending them on a false scent into the mountains, when you knew that he had taken the road to the sea coast, and had nearly succeeded in getting on board a Spanish vessel? Seize him, soldiers! a hundred lashes on the feet, a hundred sequins out of the purse, which shall only close in proportion to the swelling of the feet."

You know, my lord, that sentence is quickly executed in the kingdoms of Fez and Morocco, so that poor Abner was speedily and soundly cudgelled, without his taste being in the smallest degree consulted. He indulged himself in cursing his extraordinary fate, which appeared to condem his purse and the soles of his feet to suffer so severely every time that his majesty was moved to lose anything.

As he, with groans and sighs, was preparing to limp out of the hall, amidst the loud laughter of the assembled domestics, Schunri entreated him not to be ungrateful for the distinguished honour which the Emperor had shewn him, for "do you not feel it as such," said he, "that our gracious master cannot sustain any loss in which you do not participate? Nevertheless, if you will promise me something as a consideration, I will always give you due warning of any loss which the Lord of the West may in future sustain. I will come to your booth in the Jews' street, and say 'Keep in your house, Abner—you know why—shut yourself in your little room until sunset, under lock and bolt."

Thus, my lord, ends the history of the Jew Abner, who had seen nothing.'"

When the slave had ended his narration, and all was again quiet in the hall, the young scribe reminded his old friend that the thread of their conversation had been broken off; and he begged him now to explain wherein lay the all-powerful charm of story-hearing.

"That is very easily accounted for," replied the old man. "The spirit of man is lighter and more unstable than water, which, nevertheless, can be moulded into a thousand forms, and, little by little, pierces through all resistance. It is free as air, and becomes lighter and purer the higher it raises itself from the earth. The soul of man is destined for a higher sphere, nor will it be contented with the narrow bounds of the scene around it. There is, therefore, in man a tendency to raise himself above ordinary affairs, and to move in a larger, freer region, if it were only in dreams. You yourself, my young friend, said that you lived the stories over again, and felt and acted with every person mentioned in them. From this, then, proceeds the charm which they possess in your eyes: while the inventions of another's brain delighted you in the narrations of the slave, you yourself imagined while you listened: your thoughts no longer attached themselves to everyday objects; no: you lived in all you heard; you were the very person there spoken of, to whom all the wonderful adventures happened. Thus did a story of this sort raise your mind above present circumstances, which possessed no beauty or attraction to you; thus did it soar to newer and freer regions, and you lived for a time in an ideal world. The tale became to you a truth; or, if you like it better, the truth became a tale; your imagination and whole existence lived in the tales."

"I do not quite understand you," replied the young merchant; "but you are quite right in saying that we live in the tales and they in us. Well do I remember those delightful days of waking dreams, when we figured to ourselves that, thrown on barren, inhospitable islands, we held consultation on the means of preserving life. Often, in fancy, have we made ourselves a hut of willow branches, and shared a scanty meal of wretched fruit, when scarcely a hundred paces off we could, in reality, have partaken of the best. Yes, those were times when we expected the appearance of a good fairy, or a wondrous dwarf, who would inform us that the earth was speedily to open a passage to some palace of rock crystal, where the attendant spirits would await our orders for dinner."

The young men laughed, but allowed that their friend had not

exceeded the truth, "for, even now," said one of them, I am not proof against the charm of a story of enchantment; for instance, although I should be not a little angry if my brother were to come in with a stupid story of our neighbour the fat baker's misfortune in having had to deal with an enchanter, who, out of spite, had changed him into a bear, and left him howling horribly in his room, and should set my brother down as a liar, yet if, on the contrary, he were to tell me that our fat neighbour had gone a long journey into a far distant land, where he had fallen into the hands of an enchanter, who had changed him into a bear, I should, little by little, identify myself with the story, travel with the fat baker, experience all sorts of extraordinary adventures, and not be very much surprised to see my friend clad in a hairy skin, and going on all fours."

"And yet," said the old man, "there is a very delightful description of story-telling, where neither fairy nor enchanter make their appearance, where there are no crystal palaces, nor genii to bring enchanted meats; no roc birds, no magic horses, but quite another style of thing from what are usually called *tales*."

"To what do you allude?" cried the young men. "A different description of story-telling from tales!"

"I think a decided difference ought to be made between *tales* and such narrations as come under the general head of *stories*.* If I say I am going to relate a *tale*, you may fairly conclude that it will be full of adventures out of the common way, and will carry you to a region totally unlike the nature of anything here below; or, to speak more plainly, you might expect an account of a different state of existence from that of mortal men. In the fate of the persons of whom it treats, it intermingles the extraordinary power of fairies, enchanters, genii, and spirits. The whole relation assumes a wonderful and unusual aspect, like the patterns of our carpets, or the paintings of our best masters which the Europeans call arabesques. It is forbidden to a true Mussulman to create again either by painting or otherwise anything once created by Allah. One therefore sees, on their webs, most extraordinary twisted trees, and branches with

* The English words *tales* and *stories* do not convey the different ideas which the German words *Märchen* and *Erzählungen* express: the former as distinguished from the latter indicates fictions, in which the *supernatural* is mingled.

men's heads; again, men issuing from a fish or a bush; little figures, reminding you of nature, and yet entirely unnatural. Do you understand me?"

"I think I catch your meaning," said the scribe, "but pray continue."

"The tale is of this description; fabulous, improbable, astonishing, because so differing from the events of ordinary life. Its scenes are laid in foreign lands, and the time of which they treat long since passed away. Every nation possesses them: Turks and Persians, Chinese and Moguls; but Europe is richer in them than any other country—at least a learned giaour told me so—but they fall far short of ours in beauty. They have also their fairies, who dwell in splendid palaces. They have also female enchanters, whom they call witches, malicious, frightful hags, who live in wretched huts, and, instead of muscle-shell carriages, drawn by griffins, in which to travel through the blue air, they mount a besom, and pierce the foggy atmosphere. They have also their gnomes, and spirits of earth, who are in an everlasting bustle. These are *tales*; but *story* is of another description. The persons of whom it speaks pass their time in the ordinary manner on earth, leading the usual life of mortals; and deeply interesting is the uncertainty of that person's fate who, neither from enchantment, imprecations, or the power of a fairy, but only from his own conduct, or some wonderful events, becomes poor or rich, happy or unhappy."

"Right!" answered one of the young people. "Such sort of pure story is found sometimes in the relations of Scheherazade, which are called "The Thousand-and-one Nights." The adventures or Haroun Alraschid and his viziers are of this description. Going out in disguise, they were spectators of the apparently most extraordinary events, which, in the end, resolved themselves in the most natural manner possible. Yes, and though these are far from the worst in the collection, how different are they in their origin and course from the story of "Prince Camaralzaman; or the Three Calendars with one eye; or that of the fisherman who drew a casket from the sea, fastened with the seal of Solomon; but the original and peculiar charm of both is, that we experience a novel and unusual sensation in reading them. In *tales* the extraordinary is fabulous, and enchantment acts upon the every-day events of life; in *story*, every thing is kept within the laws of nature, however surprising and unusual they may be."

"It is singular," said the scribe, "that the course of natural

events, as related in story, delight us no less than the supernatural in tales. From what does this proceed?"

"It consists in the manner in which the characters are drawn," answered the old man. "In *tales*, the *wonderful* is so prominent, and so great an influence is exercised over the individual by it, that a mere sketch is all that can be given of the separate figures and their characters; while in *story*, each person is made to speak and act conformably to his character, and this constitutes the principal enjoyment of its study."

"You are quite right," said the young merchant. "I have never taken the time to come to such a just conclusion; I have only felt it to be as you say, and passed it over. I used to luxuriate over the first description of writing, and have found the second rather tedious; but the reason I never knew until you supplied me with a key by which to discover the secret, a touchstone by which we can prove and judge of both."

"If you thus make use of it," rejoined the old man, "it will increase your enjoyment, in teaching you to reflect upon what you have read or heard. But see, there is a story about to begin."

The third slave advanced, and commenced as follows:—

The Fate of Said.

DURING the reign of the famous Caliph Haroun Alraschid, there dwelt at Balsora a man named Benezar. He had been a merchant, but having massed considerable wealth, he gave up trade, and determined to pass the remainder of his life in peaceful retirement. He had an only son, but he did not intend him to be a merchant like himself. "I shall have enough to leave him," said he to his neighbours, "and my son shall not wear out his best years as I have done, in providing for his old age. I will teach him prudence, forethought, and frugality; with these habits he can spend his youth in moderate pleasures and in improving occupations, and his age in contentment and in the exercise of benevolence." Acccordingly, Benezar's son was not brought up to trade; he received an excellent education, and was early taught every thing which could enlarge the mind, or strengthen the body. Whilst still scarcely more than a child, he had attained such proficiency in the manly exercises of wrestling, racing, riding, swimming, &c., that he was allowed to join in the sports of the youth of Balsora, and considered as their equal, though by many years their junior.

When young Said had reached his eighteenth year, his father sent him to Mecca to visit the tomb of the Prophet, and to complete his education in religious matters, according to the command of the law and the custom of the country. Before parting with his only child, Benezar gave him much salutary advice, to which Said listened with all the reverence a son should give to the counsels of his parent. "Yet another word," said Benezar; "your mother, when she lay on her death-bed, confided to my care this silver whistle, with the feebly uttered charge to give it to you on your 20th birth-day, and on no account to entrust it to you before. I gathered from what she said, that she imagined you to be under the protection of a supernatural being; and certainly, though disposed to be incredulous, I could not help being struck by the singular circumstances attending your birth. A violent storm shook the very foundations of the city, and then cleared off in a most miraculous manner. The whole house, and indeed the surrounding streets, were fragrant with the exquisite odour of roses and hyacinths. Your mother then showed me the silver whistle, but did not entrust it to my care until her death, nearly six years afterwards. You are now, Said, about to leave me for some time. Life is so uncertain, that before you return I may be gathered to my fathers. I consider it, therefore, more in fulfilment of your dying mother's request, to give the silver whistle to you at once, though you yet want more than two years to the appointed time, rather than to wait until you are again with me, and run the risk of its being mislaid or uncared for in the event of my decease before that time. You are in every respect in advance of your years; from your appearance, very much so. Take, then, this bequest of your mother's; treat it with reverence, if not for its own sake (I leave that, my son, to your own discretion), at least for *hers* who is gone from you for ever."

Such were the parting words of Benezar of Balsora to his only son. Said took a tender farewell of his father; he hung the chain to which the silver whistle was attached round his neck, and sticking the whistle itself into his girdle, he flung himself into his saddle, and hastened to the spot whence the caravan was to start for Mecca. In a short space of time, eighty camels laden with merchandize, and four hundred horsemen, were assembled, and Said left the home of his fathers from which he was destined to be absent many long years. The novelty of the scenes through which he was passing, the new companions by whom he was surrounded, served for awhile

to beguile his thoughts; but when the caravan passed the confines of the desert, and every thing around assumed a desolate and melancholy appearance, his spirits took the same tone, and his mind reverted to his parting from his only parent, and the early death of his mother. Then his father's singular story recurred to his memory; he considered and re-considered the matter, but could not come to any satisfactory conclusion; he drew forth his whistle and applied it to his lips, but he could draw forth no sound, which greatly surprised and disconcerted him. He recalled to his memory all the histories of fairies and genii which he had heard in his childhood, but to which his mind had heretofore given no heed. They now seemed more than probable, nay, quite possible; and bewildered by his new belief, Said sat on his horse as one asleep, and pursued his way in a dreamy state, careless of the mirth of his companions, neither joining in their laughter, tales, or songs.

Our young traveller was excessively handsome. His figure combined all the graces of youth with all the vigour of manhood. However perfect the form of his features, the expression of his countenance was its chief charm. His large dark eyes beamed with the fiery enthusiasm natural to his age, whilst his finely-formed brow and somewhat of determination in the compression of the lips gave indication of a matured mind and resolute spirit. His dress harmonized with his whole appearance, and was worthy of attention; and, mounted on a spirited steed, he presented altogether a striking appearance. An old man who rode near him was so interested in him, as to seek to rouse him from his reverie by numerous questions. Said, who regarded age with peculiar reverence, answered with respect, though not without reflection and caution, which so far from displeasing his querist, added to the admiration he already felt for the young man. As their intimacy increased, Said became less reserved, and at last he betrayed the subject which most occupied his thoughts, by asking the old man whether he believed that spirits, whether good or evil, exercised any influence on the denizens of this lower world.

The stranger stroked his beard, looked thoughtfully upwards, and then replied in a serious tone, "It cannot be denied but that stories of such supernatural influence have been well-authenticated, and are moreover related and believed by those who are competent to judge correctly on the matter. For my own part, old as I am, and a wanderer into many countries, neither in this land nor in foreign parts have I, in the whole course of

my life, ever seen a fairy, spirit, or magician; not even a dwarf or a giant."

Notwithstanding this speech, the old traveller commenced the relation of several wonderful stories with all the animated zeal one would suppose to arise from a firm belief in the truth of his statements. Said listened eagerly to them, and ere long arrived at the conclusion that all was indeed true; he was himself under the protection of a beneficent being who had presented him with the silver whistle, silent, indeed, whilst he was in safety, but powerful in time of danger, to call his guardian spirit to his assistance.

Meanwhile, the caravan continued to advance into the desert, the scenery around became more and more dreary, until every trace of vegetation ceased, and nothing was to be seen but the everlasting sands, and in the distance ranges of bare rocks, which were the only variety in the prospect. Towards noon the caravan reached the entrance of a defile between two rocky mountains, where the tents were pitched, and it was determined to remain there during the excessive heat. In the evening they resumed their journey, and continued it through the night. Said, who had a quick eye for all that was beautiful, and a heart easily excited to admiration, could not fail to be struck by the new and singularly grand character of all around him. Life in the desert seemed a different existence. The solemnity of silence awoke in his soul strange and indescribable sensations. Towards sunrise the next morning a cloud seemed to rise from the eastern horizon. At first, nothing was thought of this circumstance, until the dense dark body appeared approaching; then a universal panic overspread the caravan: some imagined it to be pillars of sand which would overwhelm them in inevitable destruction; others pacified themselves by believing it to be another caravan; but Said's old companion pronounced it as his opinion that it was a horde of wandering Arabs. Said, whose eye was not so well trained, could not perceive the approaching danger, and descried nothing but black clouds of dust. Soon, however, the old man's prediction was verified; the dull tramp of the horse's feet over the sand was distinctly heard, the flash of spears was plainly seen, and with the strength and velocity of the whirlwind, the foe bore down on the hapless caravan. The affray was short and fierce. The merchants, although numerous, were unpractised in arms, and could offer little resistance. Said fought with all the energy of his nature; he attacked the leader of the invading party, a wild

warrior mounted on a magnificent horse; his tall figure and powerful frame, the stern simplicity of his dress and appearance, his spear in his hand, and his shield on his arm, completed a figure which captivated young Said's ardent imagination, and animated him to the fight. Fearful was the rage of the Arabs when they saw their chieftain torn from his horse and stain the hot sand of the desert with his life-blood. Their whole violence turned against the stripling who had wrought the deed. Said was surrounded, overpowered, and captured.

The Arabs, who did not all belong to one tribe, now commenced the partition of the goods and the prisoners, and then parted company, one party directing their course to the east, the other to the south. Near Said rode four armed men, who regarded him with looks of the greatest hatred, and menaced him with approaching torture and death.

A date-grove, in the shade of which numerous tents were pitched, now announced their approach to the Arab village. A tribe of women and children flocked out to meet them, who, on learning the death of Said's opponent, broke forth into the most fearful cries and yells, rushed towards Said, and seemed ready to tear him in pieces. Their violence was so great, that the capturers of Said were obliged to become his protectors. "He has killed the great Almoran," they said, "in honourable combat: therefore must he die not by the hand of a woman, but by the sword of the brave."

They then conveyed their prisoner into the presence of an old man, who, from the deference with which the unbending warriors of the desert approached him, Said inferred was their Sheik. They were about to inform him of the result of their attack, when the old man interrupted them, saying, "I know all," he said; "the shrieks of the women suggested the idea, your dejected looks confirm it; Almoran is fallen."

"Almoran is fallen," replied the Arabs, "but in this youth, Selim, behold his foe. Only decide on his fate; our hands are ready, eager to execute it. What shall be the manner of his death? Shall we transfix him with our spears, or make him a target for our arrows? Shall a single blow of the sword deprive him of life, or shall he be torn to pieces in lingering torments by wild horses of the desert?

During these speeches the Sheik had contemplated the youth's unmoved countenance; his warrior-spirit could not regard without interest such resolute bravery, such recklessness of torture and of death, in one so young. "Who art thou?"

inquired he. Said answered him briefly and composedly. "Didst thou attack my son with mean murderous intent? Didst thou watch thy wicked opportunity, and in an unguarded moment lay mine only son low?"

"My lord," answered Said, "I slew Almoran in open fight; he was the aggressor, and before I dealt him his death-blow, had laid eight of my companions dead at his feet."

"Speaks he the truth?" inquired the Sheik of the Arabs.

"He does," replied the foremost of them. "He *did* slay Almoran in open fight."

"Then," continued Selim, "has he done nothing but that we ourselves glory in doing also. He has only slain one who was attempting to deprive him of friends and freedom; therefore loose ye his bands."

The Arabs gazed on their chief in astonishment. "Set free the murderer of the great Almoran!" they cried. "Forgive the destroyer of Selim's own son! Oh! that we had executed at once his well-merited punishment!"

"He shall not die," said the Sheik decidedly; "give me my son's destroyer; I will provide his punishment; he shall be my slave."

"Said was at a loss for words in which to express his gratitude. The Arabs left the the tent murmuring; and when the women and children heard of the Sheik's judgment, they vowed they themselves would avenge Almoran's death, even though his own father could forgive his blood-stained murderer.

The other prisoners were divided as part of the booty. The most distinguished were allowed to send to Balsora for ransom-money; those, however, of whom no such golden hopes could be entertained were assigned to the office of shepherds and camel-drivers, and some were obliged to perform still more menial services. But the fate of Said was quite different, and induced him more than once to think that the friendship of some powerful though invisible being had some mysterious influence over him. The old Sheik treated him not as his servant, but as his son. Said adopted the garb, the language, and habits of the Arab race; and could the hostile spirit of his capturers, Almoran's brothers-in arms, have been appeased, and his own unconquerable longing for home have been subdued, the life he led would have been a very happy one. Whether he shared in the excitement of their warlike enterprizes with other Arab hordes, whether he conversed in filial confidence with his protector, whether he bent his knee in solemn adoration to the God of his

fathers, there was a strange peace at his heart, a strange sympathy between him and the wild characters around him, a strange congeniality in every thing surrounding him. The unbroken expanse of sand, without a sign of life in flower, or beast, or bird, save on the lovely oasis where the tents were pitched, where the date-trees and the feathery palm-trees cast their grateful shade, and the transparent rivulet ran murmuring past: all was suited to his taste, and he would have desired no other fate than to choose from the beautiful Arab maidens one to be his wife, and, reconciled to the whole tribe, to pass his life among them. But such was not to be the fate of Said. The hearts of Almansor's kinsmen were bitter against him, and no Arab maiden would place her hand in that which was stained with Almansor's blood.

The old Sheik felt that his life would not last long, and foresaw the vengeance which would then fall on the devoted head of his adopted son. He therefore called Said to him, and thus addressed him:—"I had hoped the noble natures of my Arab brethren had long ere this forgiven thee thy slaughter of my son. I had intended *thee*, thou perfection of youth and beauty and manly prudence and strength, to supply his place to them, as well as to me; but it cannot be so; their vengeance forcibly controlled will prove the more fearful when that control is removed, and it is my duty to protect you while I can, by ensuring thy safety against that time when I can protect thee no longer. I will send thee to thy home. I will provide thee with a trusty escort through the desert."

"A trusty escort," echoed Said; "whom of all thy tribe canst thou, my father, trust with my life?"

"I will bind them by a fearful oath," answered the Sheik, "not to molest thee. Fear not." And Selim kept his promise. He presented Said with a horse, weapons, and a guard of five men, whom he compelled to swear not to injure him, and then the old Sheik parted from his adopted son with many tears. The five Arabs rode gloomily and silently by his side, giving evident tokens that nothing but their oath to the Sheik prevented them from immediately putting him to death. As they approached the spot where the caravan had been attacked, and where Said had dealt Almansor his death-blow, the Arabs' looks became even fiercer, and Said perceived with horror that they were whispering together. He strained every nerve to catch the subject of their discourse, but they did not speak in the ordinary language of the tribe. Selim, however, had spent many

hours in teaching Said these mysterious signs, and he now learnt by them that his companions were indignantly commenting on the conduct of Selim towards his son's murderer, and lamenting their own inability to take the execution of his merited punishment on themselves.

"Here is the spot," cried one; "here we fell upon the caravan, and here died the bravest of men by the hand of a stripling."

"The wind of the desert has left no trace of the horses' feet in the sand," continued another; "but I know the place well."

"And," said a third, "shall we suffer the murderer of Almansor to go unharmed, unpunished from us? No! though the fierce whirlwind of a father's wrath has passed over his head as lightly as the breeze over these desert-sands, the storm of a friend's revenge shall not leave him unscathed!"

"But," answered another, "we have sworn to the Sheik not to injure the youth. How then can we fulfil our revenge!"

"Too true," replied the first speaker, "and the murderer must go uninjured by his victim's friends."

"Hold," cried the fiercest of the five, "the old Sheik is doubtless very wise, but not so much so as he may think. What did he swear us to do? To spare the youth's life. Well and good, we will spare his life. But he took not an oath of the mid-day burning sun, or the sharp tooth of the midnight prowler of the waste to spare Almansor's murderer! Here on this spot, where the fell deed was done, shall he expiate his guilt. We will bind him hand and foot, and leave him to his fate."

Said listened in horror to their barbarous determination. He made one effort to escape, but it proved futile; he was overpowered, and the Arabs, regardless of his prayers and entreaties, his offers of an unheard-of ransom, his threatenings of the vengeance of an all-seeing God, accomplished their design, and in a few seconds the faintest echoes of the tramp of their horses and their shouts of exultation died away, and the hapless Said was left alone, bound hand and foot, in the very heart of the desert. The arid sands spread out for miles around him, the sun every moment rising higher in the heavens, and no other prospect before him than that of dying in the protracted torments of famine or insufferable heat. Several hours passed thus, and Said felt his very brain scorched by the intense heat of the sun; indeed, the sand around had become so hot that it appeared to him as if he lay on a bed of molten fire. By his struggles, however, he at last succeeded in freeing one arm, with which he

was enabled to raise his whistle to his burning lips, but he could draw forth no sound; in despair, he suffered it to drop from his grasp, his head fell listlessly back on his fiery pillow, and insensibility relieved him from his sufferings. He was aroused by a voice near him; he felt his shoulder roughly seized, and he uttered a piercing shriek, for he imagined it to be some wild beast preparing to devour him. In a few moments, however, he had sufficiently recovered his senses to recognise the voice of a man who was busying himself in loosing his bonds and applying restoratives to him. Two or three others stood around and assisted in helping the bewildered Said to rise. He then perceived a group of heavily-laden camels, which seemed to belong to his deliverer, a short stout man of very unprepossessing appearance. His forehead was singularly low, and his grizzled black hair grew over it in a very uncouth manner; his eyes of a grey cat-like hue were deeply sunken in his head, and were overshadowed with dark bushy eye-brows; his teeth projected very much, and gave to his mouth, and indeed to his whole face, an unpleasant expression; his dress was that of a Bagdad merchant, which he informed Said he was. He assisted the youth very kindly to mount one of his camels, gave him meat and drink, and when Said was able to relate his adventure, listened with great interest to it. He advised the youth to come with him to Bagdad, to which place he was on his way; and from thence he could find a conveyance either to Mecca or Balsora. Said readily consented, and the camels moved on. To beguile the way, the merchant spoke of the celebrated Haroun Alraschid; he praised his judgment and justice, and related many wonderful stories concerning him.

"Our lord," continued the merchant, "the commander of the faithful, is a wonderful man. If you think that, like ordinary mortals, he requires the refreshment of sleep, you are mistaken; two or three hours' repose in the heat of the day is sufficient for him, and during the remainder of his time his mind and body are in constant activity. You must know that Mesrour, his first chamberlain, is a relation of mine; and though he preserves a silence inviolate as that of the grave respecting his master's more important business, he occasionally drops a word or two, which gives us an insight into the more ordinary occupations of his time. During the night, the Caliph and his confidant perambulate the city, and seldom a week passes without their meeting with some singular adventure. Sometimes they assume the disguise of merchants, at other times that of soldiers or sailors;

so that they can penetrate, without fear of being recognised, into every part of the town, and become thoroughly acquainted with the state of affairs, and the sentiments of every portion of the people."

So spake the merchant; and Said, though he longed to see or hear from his father, was seized with an irrepressible desire to see the famous city of Bagdad, and its still more renowned caliph.

In about ten days, the travellers reached the place of their destination; and Said was indeed overwhelmed with the grandeur and magnificence of the city, which was then at the summit of its glory.

The merchant, whose name was Kalum-Bek, invited the youth to take up his abode at his house; to which Said willingly consented, for he now began to feel the ill effects of his excitement and exposure to the noonday sun in the desert.

A few hours' undisturbed rest, however, sufficed to restore him; he was anxious to see as much as possible of the city during his short stay in it, and lost no time, on the following morning, in attiring himself in the splendid dress which was the parting gift of the good old Sheik.

The merchant could not refrain from expressing his admiration of the youth's appearance.

"You are indeed," said he, "splendidly attired! A man who owns such a suit as that can well afford to recompense a poor merchant who saved his life!"

"Good sir," answered Said, colouring, "I have no gold with me; but if you will kindly advance me money sufficient to perform my journey home, my father will reward you liberally for that and all other services you have rendered me."

"Your father, youth!" returned the merchant, his whole aspect changing as he spoke; "and who is your father? I think the sun has affected your brain, for you cannot expect me, in my sober senses, to believe the monstrous tale you told me in the desert! Your father, indeed! a rich merchant in Aleppo, and you the sole heir to his wealth! So far, very possible. And you were taken prisoner by marauding Arabs, killed the chieftain of the band, and were afterwards adopted by the murdered man's father! Now, young man, is this a tale to be believed? And moreover, is it probable, is it possible, that a caravan should be overpowered in the desert, its merchandise stolen, its owners led into captivity, and not a rumour of the event reach Bagdad or any other of the cities through which I have so

recently travelled? Youth, I blush for your shameful lies and shameless brow; your falsehood is only equalled by your insolence. I have inquired of numerous merchants of Aleppo for one Benezar, a wealthy man with one only son, and they all agree in saying that there is no such a person."

Said could only assert his innocence, and declare that as he knew the Caliph's ear was ever open to the cry of the distressed, he would appeal to him, and obtain from him the means of restoration to his father.

"And how," cried the merchant, "are you to gain admittance to his presence? Remember, young man, that my cousin Mesrour keeps the key of the Caliph's audience chamber; I can give him a hint how skilfully your tongue can frame falsehoods! but I will not be too hard on you, Said; you are young, and may improve. I will give you a place in my shop at the bazaar: there you shall serve me for a year; and if you prove faithful and honest, I will then pay you sufficient wages to convey you whither you wish to go. I will give you until noon to consider my proposition; at that hour, if you do not agree to what I have just offered you, I will call you to account for the food you have eaten, and the wine you have drunk, since I first found you in the desert, and also for the seat on my camel, which for ten whole days you occupied. Your fine suit of clothes will indemnify me for all expenses; and then, with no gold in your purse, and nothing but a few rags on your back, you will be turned into the streets, branded with the name of a liar and a thief."

With these words, the wicked man left the unfortunate youth to his own reflections. Said was at a loss what steps to take; his hatred of his oppressor was so great, that the idea of being his servant for a year was most revolting to him. But what else could he do? Without money or clothes he could never reach home, and he felt too truly that all appeal to the Caliph would prove in vain.

He therefore reluctantly determined to agree to Kalum-Bek's proposal; and the day following, the merchant led his new servant to his appointed place in the bazaar. He showed him the shawls and veils he was to dispose of to the best advantage, and directed him to stand at the door of the shop, and persuade passers-by to inspect and purchase his goods. We have already said that Said was extremely handsome: he was, therefore, peculiarly suited for his new occupation; for his graceful figure, his beautiful features, the half-proud half-melancholy expression of

his countenance, captivated all beholders, and procured more purchasers for Kalum-Bek's merchandise than the hideous little man could procure for himself in double the time.

He was therefore well pleased with his servant, caressed and rewarded him. But Said was not to be deceived by these self-interested marks of favour; his whole mind was occupied by the hope of one day returning to his beloved home, and this hope supported him through long days of servitude, and visited and consoled him during his short hours of repose in sleep.

One day, when an unusual quantity of goods had been disposed of, and all the carriers and porters in Kalum-Bek's service were employed in conveying them to the homes of the purchasers, a lady entered the shop; she purchased a shawl, and requested Kalum-Bek to send it to her house immediately.

"Within half an hour I will," answered the merchant; "at present all my porters are out: as soon as one of them returns, I will send your shawl whither you direct me."

"I will not wait," returned the lady imperiously; "it is your duty to send home all that is purchased at your shop, and I desire you will immediately procure a porter for me. Who is that tall youth gazing about him so idly? cannot he carry home my shawl?"

"No, no," cried Kalum-Bek anxiously; "he must not leave my shop; he is my magnet of attraction, my decoy-bird, my everything."

"Indeed!" returned the lady, pointing to Said to take up the parcel, "I am sorry to deprive you of so valuable an auxiliary for the space of ten minutes; come with me, young man."

"Make haste," whispered Kalum to his *magnet;* "in the name of Arimanes and all evil spirits, make haste. If I do not let you go, that old witch will bring the bazaar about our ears; go, and return as quickly as you can."

Said followed the lady with alacrity through various streets, until they reached a long and very gloomy one.

The lady stopped at the door of a magnificent house, ascended a flight of marble steps, passed through a splendid hall, and entered an apartment, the folding doors of which flew open at her approach. In the centre of the room, on a sumptuous divan, sat a lady, apparently much younger than Said's conductress. Although the lower part of her face was concealed, one could judge of her exquisite beauty by what met the sight —the finely-formed head; long, black silken hair, confined in a net-work of glittering silver; the delicate, perfectly-arched eye-

brows; the soft, dark, oval-shaped eye of the east beneath them. Said had never beheld or imagined so lovely a being! Her dress, too, was most magnificent; a vest of green satin was confined at the waist by a girdle of precious stones; her slender figure was carelessly enveloped in shawls, *one* of which was of more value than the heaps displayed in the bazaar; jewels glittered round her ankles and on her arms, which were uncovered, the sleeves of her satin vest being looped up to the shoulder with splendid brooches.

"Come hither, good youth," she said, in rather a tremulous voice, "tell me your history."

Said drew near to the lovely speaker, and seated himself, as she motioned to him to do, near the divan. He then obeyed her strange request, and related his adventures from the period of his quitting his father's house. The lady regarded the young man attentively. It has been already observed that he was very handsome; and now his somewhat too robust form and daring eye, softened by the stern hand of sorrow, his tender, melancholy, expressive smile, the low, plaintive tone of his voice, all were calculated to captivate the romantic fancy of an eastern maiden. She listened carefully to his tale; then, taking the small silver whistle in her hand,

"Said," she answered, while the blood mounted to her forehead, "Said, this whistle is my gift; I am the fairy who protected your mother, presided over your birth, watched you through childhood, and am now ready to do for you whatever you may request me."

Said could not answer for surprise; he fell at her feet, pressed his lips to the snowy hand she rather timidly extended to him, and implored to be immediately restored to his father.

The lovely fairy appeared somewhat disconcerted: there was a long pause.

"No, Said," she answered at length, "*that* request I cannot *yet* grant. You remember your mother desired that the whistle should not be given to you until you attained your twentieth year; the disobedience of your father to that command is the origin of all your troubles. Your fate will not change until you reach the appointed age, which you tell me will not be for six months. Until that period arrives, you must be content to remain in Bagdad."

"That is indeed the worst of fates," sighed poor Said; "but I will yet make one request. I was trained by my father to delight in all warlike exercises, and during my residence among

the Arabs I attained great perfection in the art. Doubtless, gracious lady, you are aware that in this city is a weekly tournament. But in this tournament none can enter the lists who is not provided with costly apparel and a richly-caparisoned horse. Could you by your magic power so alter my face that I should not be recognized as Kalum-Bek's servant, and provide me the necessary weapons and articles of dress?"

"That is a request worthy of thy brave spirit, noble youth," replied the fairy, with animation. "Mark the situation of my house well, so that you can readily find your way hither again. Here every week you may find a horse, armour, weapons, and a mask that shall render you quite secure from the most prying eyes; two armed and mounted squires shall be ready to attend you. And now, Said, farewell. Be patient and hope: in six months your twentieth birthday will arrive."

Said returned to his duty in the bazaar with revived spirits. He was no longer desolate; he had found a friend—a generous-hearted, lovely, sympathising friend. And what though she were an unearthly being? There was nothing to terrify the weakest mind in her soft, feminine, though certainly more than *humanly* beautiful aspect.

He continued to ruminate on this singular rencontre with his protectress, until he reached the shop in the bazaar. He arrived at a critical moment: Kalum-Bek was lying prostrate, surrounded by a group of youths and children, who, dancing sportively around him, prevented him from rising, and mocked at his fruitless attempts to do so. Two well-dressed men stood by, enjoying the scene. Said's spirit was ever roused to protect the oppressed, even in the person of his harsh unjust master; his strong arm soon dispersed the more youthful portion of the group. The two bystanders however, took their part, and asked by what right Said interfered? The youth answered warmly, blows were exchanged, and the dispute only ended by Said giving so severe a blow to one of his opponents as rendered him incapable of further aggression, and induced the other to assist him in effecting a retreat.

Said then assisted his crest-fallen master to rise, who overwhelmed him with thanks, and, in the exuberance of his gratitude, proffered him his well-filled purse. Said declined the money, but took advantage of the opportunity to request to be allowed one holiday in the week; to which his master, well pleased to keep his gold, readily agreed; and for once Kalum-Bek and his servant were satisfied with each other.

The following Wednesday, the day appointed for the tournament, Said availed himself of his newly-acquired liberty; he hastened to the house of the benevolent fairy, but he was not favoured by admittance to her presence. Her promise, however, was fulfilled. A phial was presented to him, the contents of which, applied to his face, changed his complexion to an olive tint, quite different from his natural one, and his hair to a deeper black. He also put on a false dark beard, which gave him the appearance of being ten years older than he really was. He was then conducted to another room, where he found a splendid dress prepared for him, which the Caliph himself need not have disdained to wear. A servant courteously assisted him to attire himself in a rich robe with silver flowers woven on a red ground; a breast-plate of silver circles, so skilfully devised as to be perfectly flexible, and yield to every movement of the body, yet so strong as to resist the most powerful thrust of the sharpest lance; a turban of fine linen, surmounted by a plume of feathers, fastened by a diamond clasp; a Damascus blade, in a richly embroidered sheath, the hilt of which glittered with jewels of inestimable value, completed his dress; and, having surveyed himself (not without a feeling of complacency) in a polished steel mirror, he hastened to descend the steps, at the foot of which he found the magnificent horse destined for his use, attended by two others, scarcely inferior, on which his squires were mounted. He repaired to the place of rendezvous, and, not to make the story too long, the illustrious stranger was received with all due honour, and assigned a prominent place in the ensuing combats, in which, it is almost needless to say, he acquitted himself, if not to his own satisfaction, at least to the admiration of all present. He vanquished the brother of the Caliph, and the struggle between him and Ali, the Grand Vizier's brother, accounted the strongest and bravest of men, was so protracted and so equal, that it was agreed to defer it until another time.

The following day, the city resounded with the praises of the handsome, noble, and victorious stranger; and Said listened to them with a throbbing heart, from his obscure corner in Kalum-Bek's shop in the Bazaar.

For several weeks he repaired to the fairy's abode, and received each time more magnificent apparel. He frequently saw the beneficent donor, who applauded his courage, and incited him to renewed efforts. Her exquisite beauty, still greater loveliness of character and disposition, exercised a beneficial influence on

Said. She listened to all his complaints of the ignominy and hardships of his present situation, to all his yearnings after home, and thirst for friends and fame; she soothed his harassed spirits, urged him to patience, and prophesied brighter days to come.

Said had now arrived at the crisis of his fate, the turning point of his life. It was in his power, one evening, to render a signal service to two individuals who were assaulted by robbers, and but for Said's timely interference would have fared but ill. Amid a profusion of thanks, one of these individuals drew Said aside, discovered himself to him as the Caliph, presented him with a purse heavily laden with gold, and placed on his finger a costly ring, which would at any time open to the fortunate youth the gates of the palace and the ear of the sovereign.

When Said returned to his master, he had already made up his mind what steps to take, and lost no time in acquainting Kalum-Bek of his intention to quit his service and return to his father. The merchant was distracted at the idea; to lose his "*magnet of attraction*" would be his ruin, and it should not be! He raved—prayed—entreated—threatened—all in vain! Said was inflexible, and speedily quitted, with light heart, the tyrant's dwelling. Kalum-Bek, however, was not one to submit easily to a deprivation of his expected gains. He sent for the police, acquainted them with Said's flight, vowed that he had no money of his own, and swore that he had stolen some of his. A strict search and hot pursuit were instituted: Said was discovered setting out for Aleppo, in a caravan bound thither; was suddenly seized, tied hand and foot, and conducted to prison. In vain the hapless youth asserted his innocence, and implored to be taken before the Caliph. The purse filled with gold was drawn out of his pocket: Kalum-Bek swore it belonged to him, and Said was hastily condemned to complete the number of criminals who were then lying in the prisons of Bagdad under sentence of perpetual banishment to a desert island. Said was in despair; the convict ship was to sail on the morrow, and no hope remained of any respite. Even Kalum-Bek pleaded for a mitigation of this severe sentence; the unprincipled merchant had quite defeated his own end, which was to retain a useful servant, and now that his perjury was so unprofitable, he heartily repented of it, and wished Said journeying homewards with his own lawfully acquired gold, rather than setting sail for a desert island, the victim of his avarice and perjury. But all remonstrance was in vain. The officers of justice desired Kalum to leave the pri-

soner to his fate. "Go you to your shop," said they: "you have your gold, be content with that, and leave us to execute judgment on the thief."

Said was then thrown into a loathsome dungeon, where he found nineteen companions in misery; they received him with shouts of horrid laughter, and deeply muttered curses against their judge and the Caliph. Said flung himself on his straw pallet, and reviewed his past life. What a fate was his! Torn from his home and friends, to be first an Arab of the Desert, hated, oppressed, his life in jeopardy every hour; rescued from this, to be the humble slave of a despotic, vindictive master; to be accused of crimes from which his soul revolted, and his hands scorned to commit; now, exiled from his native country, an outcast from society, the companion of the worst and wickedest of men, the remainder of his life was to pass in labour, unmitigated by one encouraging word, uncheered by one gleam of hope! Said's gentle heart was now the prey to every evil passion. He reproached his father for parting from him, and with unconcern for his fate; he accused the lovely being to whom he owed so much, of wilful forgetfulness of her protegé; and, full of such bitter thoughts, he could offer up no prayer to God, but, prayerless and hopeless and reckless, the wretched youth embarked for the place of his banishment.

The prisoners were cast into a dismal hold, which admitted but little light or air; and the miseries endured by Said during this short passage exceeded everything he had previously suffered, or could, in his imagination, ever be again doomed to undergo.

When the ship had nearly reached its destination, a contrary wind arose, which drove it back in its course, and at length increased to such a degree, that the fears of the sailors were excited for the safety of the vessel. These fears were not groundless; the storm continued to increase in violence every moment, until all command of the ship was lost, and it drove with a frightful shock on a sunken reef of rocks. The shrieks and prayers of the despairing crew were mingled in dreadful concert with the howling of the storm. The prisoners, confined below, could only infer, from the noise above, what was the real state of the case. Their entreaties for deliverance were either unheard or unheeded; no answer was returned, no hand extended to help them. At length their despair imparted strength; they forced open the hatchway, ascended the steps, stood upon the deck, breathed again the fresh air of heaven, witnessed once

more the light of day, and gazed on the awful height of the waves that threatened momentarily to engulph the shattered vessel. But they could perceive no trace of any human being; the captain and the crew had deserted the wreck, and had probably met only the earlier with their fate. Said lashed himself to a strong plank, and committed himself to the waves. The violence with which the breakers dashed over him soon deprived him of consciousness, and he woke no more to a sense of his situation, until he was roused by the exertions of others, and he found himself on the seashore, surrounded by a group of splendidly-attired persons, who, on perceiving signs of life manifested, directed the shipwrecked traveller to be conveyed into the house, and treated with every consideration and all possible care.

Some days elapsed before Said was sufficiently recovered to appear in the presence of his benefactor. He hastened, as soon as his strength permitted him, to throw himself at his feet; but what was his astonishment when he recognised in the object of his gratitude the Caliph Haroun Alraschid!

The Caliph did not at first recognise the youth, but when Said drew from its hiding-place his treasured ring, and modestly recalled to his memory the occasion of the gift, he expressed himself most desirous to fulfil all the promises of which it was the pledge. Said proffered but two requests: he desired nothing but the vindication of his character in Bagdad, and then a speedy restoration to his parent. The Caliph immediately prepared to return to the city, accompanied by Said and a numerous suite; he lost no time, on arriving there, in summoning the police-officer who had apprehended Said at Kalum-Bek's instigation, and the judge who had so summarily convicted and condemned him. The following day, as the Caliph, the Grand Vizier, and Said were about to repair to the presence chamber to receive them, Mesrour, the chamberlain, informed his lord that a relation of his, by name Kalum-Bek, a worthy merchant in the Bazaar, desired justice from him.

"He brings a charge," continued Mesrour, "against a traveller from Aleppo, who claims from him his son, a good-for-nothing lad, I believe, who was but a short time in Kalum-Bek's service, robbed him, and fled no one knows whither."

"I will decide between them," answered the Caliph; "admit them to my presence."

Whilst Mesrour was absent from the chamber, the Caliph whispered to Said,

"The traveller from Aleppo is none other than your poor old

father; he shall see how wisely I will judge. I will give him reason to declare me to be a second Soloman! Hasten, Said, to conceal yourself behind the canopy of the throne until I call for you, and let the police officers whom we expect be detained without until I summon them."

Said's heart beat audibly as he beheld his father advance towards him. What a change two years had wrought in his appearance! His frame was much bowed, his cheek pale, his eye sunken, and his step that of a decrepid old man. The youth could scarcely restrain himself from immediately relieving his poor father's anxiety concerning him; and still more intensely did he long for permission to leave his place of concealment when Kalum-Bek's cunning face appeared in sight, and the echo of his self-satisfied voice, as he whispered to his cousin the chamberlain, fell on his ear.

As soon as the Caliph had taken his place on the throne, the Grand Vizier commanded silence, and demanded to know who appeared as plaintiff before his master. Kalum-Bek stepped forward with an unabashed countenance, and said:

"Yesterday, as I was standing at the door of my shop in the bazaar, the crier passed, accompanied by the defendant; he held a purse in his hand, the contents of which he offered to any one who could give him information respecting a youth named Said, the son of Benezar of Aleppo. You must know, O Caliph, that this Said had been in my service. I therefore stepped forward, and said, 'Stop, the purse is mine. I know the young man well.' This old man who now appears as the defendant would have embraced me in his joy—'I am Benezar,' said he, 'where is my son Said?' I then informed him how I had found his son in the desert, restored him to life, received him into my house, hired him as my servant, and treated him with implicit confidence and unbounded kindness. I further related to him how this same Said had abused my hospitality, confidence, and kindness; had robbed me of my property, and absconded from the city. I then demanded the reward offered for any information concerning him; but this unreasonable old man positively refused to give it to me, asserted that his son was a noble, honourable youth, incapable of committing such a crime, and, in short, accused me of the grossest falsehood."

It was now Benezar's turn to speak. He simply said that he knew his son must be innocent of the offence imputed to him, and besought the Caliph to investigate the matter.

"I hope," said Haroun, "you brought the young man in

question before a court of justice: it was your duty to do so, Kalum-Bek."

"I did so," answered Kalum, with confidence, looking mockingly at the dejected Benezar. "I delivered him up to justice immediately."

"Let the prefect of the police be summoned," cried the Caliph, and to Kalum-Bek's astonishment, he was confronted in a moment with the officer, to whom he had so fearfully lied and perjured himself.

"Did you allow the young man to defend himself?" asked the Caliph of the new comer. "Did you allow him time to refute the charges, and procure witnesses of his innocence?"

"He called for no witnesses," answered the prefect; "he only requested admission to *your* presence O Caliph!"

"I do not remember the case being brought before me," replied Haroun. "Are you sure the youth appealed to me?"

"We could not grant his request," returned the police officer. "It would occupy all your time, Caliph, were we to inform you of every idle appeal to your justice."

"True," said the Caliph, "if the robbery were clearly proved against him, there was no necessity for my interference. You had witnesses, of course, to prove the abstraction of the gold; and you, Kalum-Bek, can prove the gold stolen to belong to you?"

"Witnesses! proof!" repeated Kalum, turning rather pale. "No, I believe there were no witnesses; and as to the gold belonging to me, you know, O commander of the faithful, one piece of gold cannot be very readily distinguished from another."

"How do you know, then, that the gold belonged to you?" asked the Caliph.

"By the purse in which it was contained," answered Kalum.

"Have you the purse with you?" pursued the Caliph.

"Here it is," said the merchant, drawing forth the purse, and handing it to the Grand Vizier to give to the Caliph.

No sooner did the Vizier behold the purse, than he cried with a terrible voice to the affrighted Kalum—

"*Your* purse—wretch? By the beard of the Prophet, the purse is *mine*. I gave it, filled with gold pieces, at the Caliph's command, to a brave young man, who rescued us from great danger."

"Can you swear that the purse belonged to you?" asked the Caliph of the Grand Vizier.

"I can," answered he; "my daughter herself netted it."

"Then," said Haroun, "has the merchant, Kalum-Bek, sworn falsely, and the prefect given false judgment; but we will give every man his due. We will have witnesses to the fact. Call thy daughter hither," he continued to the Grand Vizier. "We will place several purses before her, and she shall identify the one of her own making."

A messenger was dispatched to the Vizier's house for the young lady, and a few minutes afterwards, a train of veiled females entered the court, the foremost of whom advanced to the foot of the throne. The Caliph rose from his seat, and, out of deference to her sex and rank, himself presented to this new witness the purses from which she was to make her selection. As the lady slightly raised her veil to examine the purses more distinctly, Said, who from his place of concealment beheld all that was passing in the court, caught a glimpse of her features; he could restrain himself no longer; but throwing aside the drapery of the throne which had concealed him from sight, he flung himself at the feet of the Grand Vizier's daughter, exclaiming—

"It is herself! my protectress! my benefactress! my good genius! my guardian angel!"

The whole court was thrown into indescribable confusion. The lady suddenly retreated with her attendants, and had disappeared from the scene, before any explanation of the youth's recognition had been given.

Benezar threw himself into the arms of his son, and wept aloud. The wicked merchant gazed from one to the other in speechless astonishment; he was soon made to understand all that was passing around him.

Haroun Alraschid was the only one who retained his presence of mind. He reascended the throne, and commanding silence, stated the facts of the case too clearly for them to be misunderstood. He condemned Kalum-Bek to refund the gold pieces.

"And as for you," he continued, addressing the prefect, "I banish you for ten years from this city and its vicinity; during which time you may study the principles of justice, and learn to love the law of equity."

Kalum-Bek was congratulating himself on escaping so easily, when the Caliph ordered the bastinado to be administered to him, and his punishment would have been very severe, had not Said petitioned for his pardon.

As soon as the court was cleared, the Grand Vizier demanded

of Said, what was his acquaintance with his daughter? Said entreated to be allowed to defer his answer until he had spoken with the young lady, and the Caliph, whose esteem and affection for Said increased every moment, enforced the request.

The result of their interview may be stated in a few words, the lady acknowledged to her father that her interest had been strongly excited for the handsome melancholy youth whom she frequently saw in the bazaar, that she felt convinced he was other than he seemed, and desirous to learn somewhat of his history, had contrived to speak with him, in the manner before stated. Unwilling to acknowledge the interest she took in him, and fearful that if offered in her own name, his pride and delicacy might restrain him from accepting pecuniary assistance, she had availed herself of the knowledge she had acquired of his story, to perform the part of the fairy whom he so confidently believed to exercise a mysterious influence over his fate.

Said willingly agreed to this transformation of his protectress into a being of mortal mould; he remained at Bagdad, and not long after the events related, united his fate for ever with that of the Grand Vizier's lovely daughter.

A murmur of applause ran through the hall as the slave ceased his tale, in which the young men heartily joined.

"Look," exclaimed the young merchant, "at that handsome young man at the end of the row. Truly it is a shame to think of freeing him. He is the handsomest slave in the whole country. Only look at his sweet countenance, his expressive eyes, and his fine figure. He might have a light occupation given him—such as the fly-fanner, or pipe-carrier; this would be mere sport to him, while he himself would be an ornament to the house he lived in. It is but three days since the Sheik bought him, and now he is giving him his liberty; it is folly—a sin!"

"Blame not the wisest man in Egypt," said the old man energetically. "Have I not already told you that he gives him his freedom because he thinks it an action that will draw down the blessing of God. You say that he is beautiful and well made, and you say truly; the Sheik's son also, whom the prophet will one day restore to his father's arms, was a lovely boy, and must by this time be also tall and fine-looking. Ought he then, for love of his gold, to free a cheap and weakly slave, and then entertain hopes of seeing his child again? No; whoever

designs performing a good action, should do it willingly or not at all."

"And see," said another, "how constantly the Sheik's eyes are fixed on that young man; and I have made the same remark the whole evening. During the relation of the stories, if his looks wandered elsewhere, they always returned to rest on the noble features of the freedman. It must be no small sacrifice to part with him."

"Do you imagine that the loss of a thousand tomans will be felt by him who each day receives the treble of the sum?" said the old man. "If his glance rests with sorrow on the youth, it is because he reminds him that his son may also be languishing in a foreign land, where perchance some compassionate master will in time restore him to his country and his friends."

"You are most likely right," said the young merchant; "and it shames me to think how easily I am led to put the worst construction on people's motives, while you always seem to regard the brighter side of things; but mankind are everywhere *so* bad—have you not found it so, my old friend?"

"Not all of them," replied the old man. "Once I felt as you do; I listened to every-thing against my fellow-creatures, and imagined myself injured by them, until I contracted the worst possible opinion of them: but all at once it occurred to me that Allah, whose justice equals his wisdom, would never have permitted a state of unmixed evil to exist upon this beautiful earth. I bethought me of all that I had seen, or heard, or experienced of evil, and I found that I had very much overrated it, and had entirely overlooked the good. The works of mercy which I had witnessed passed unregarded, and in the union and harmony of virtuous families I had seen nothing to be commended; while, on the contrary, everything either improper or wicked, which I perceived in the conduct of others, had made a deep impression on my memory. I now began to examine things with other eyes, and rejoiced in the discovery that, though evil unhappily predominated (permitted, doubtless, by the Supreme for some wise purpose), yet that good was not so sparingly shed abroad as I had been led to imagine."

Here the old man was interrupted by the overseer of the slaves, who brought a request from the Sheik that he would form one of his circle. The young men were not a little surprised at so distinguished a mark of respect being paid to their old favourite, whom they had considered as little above a mendicant. On his leaving them, they detained the overseer, to

question him concerning the name and rank of this now to them mysterious person.

"What!" exclaimed the person interrogated, while he clasped his hands in astonishment, "do you not know him?"

"Not in the least."

"And yet," continued the overseer, "you have been seen several times in his company, for my lord the Sheik has himself observed it. It was only lately that he said, 'Those young people must possess some merit to have attracted that worthy man's notice.'"

"But who is he?" said the young merchant impatiently.

"You must be joking in pretending not to know him," answered the overseer. "No one enters this hall without especial permission, and this very day the old man requested leave to introduce some young men into it, and received the gracious reply, that in Ali Banu's house he might ever do as he pleased."

"Leave us no longer in suspense, we entreat you," said the young men, "for on our honour we know nothing of him but as a chance acquaintance."

"Well then you may indeed consider yourselves as fortunate, for you have become acquainted with so celebrated a man, that his very notice is an honour to you. He is no less a person than Mustapha, the learned dervish."

"Mustapha! the learned Mustapha, who educated the Sheik's son! he who has written so much, and travelled to all parts of the world? Have we indeed talked with Mustapha, and that without the slightest reverence?"

For a long time did the youths converse together on the subject of the dervish Mustapha, rejoicing in the conviction that so venerable and celebrated a person had not thought them unworthy of his notice, and had even allowed them the privilege of contending with him in argument. They were now much surprised by a message from the Sheik, requesting to speak to them. Their hearts beat quickly, for never had they spoken to a person of so much consequence, even in private, much less before so large an assembly; however, they calmed their agitation, and followed the overseer to the presence of the Sheik.

Ali Banu was seated on a richly-embroidered cushion, drinking sherbet; on his right hand sat the dervish Mustapha, whose unpretending garments were spread over magnificent pillows, and his mean-looking sandals rested on a handsome

Persian carpet. His distinguished bearing and intelligent eye, however, seemed to give him full claim to the seat to which he had been invited. He appeared to be endeavouring to console and encourage the Sheik, who looked grave and anxious. The young men could not but fancy that it was with the view of changing the current of his thought, that they were summoned before him.

"Welcome, young men," said the Sheik, "welcome to the house of Ali Banu. My old friend here merits my best thanks for bringing me acquainted with you, although I think he might have accomplished it a little sooner. Which of you is the scribe?"

"I, my lord, at your service," said the person alluded to, while he crossed his arms, and bowed profoundly.

"You are very fond of listening to tales, and of reading fine verses and sentiments, are you not?"

The youth blushed, and replied, "My lord, to me there is no greater pleasure; it forms the mind, while it passes the time happily away. Every one to their taste. I blame no one who does not."

"Very well, very well," replied the Sheik, while he beckoned the second youth to approach. "Who are you?" said he.

"My lord, I am a surgeon's assistant, and have been fortunate enough to perform some cures."

"Well," answered the Sheik, "and you have also a taste for good eating, I hear. You have a fancy for dining with those of your friends whose tables are most plentifully covered."

The young man looked ashamed, for he felt that the old man had betrayed his foible; but, summoning all his courage, he replied, "My lord, I confess that I reckon a participation in the good things of life, in the society of friends, to be one of the most pleasurable things imaginable. My purse, it is true, only allows me to regale my friends on water melons, and such like humble fare. We eat them merrily, though of course our pleasure would increase with greater means of entertainment."

This candid answer delighted the Sheik, who laughed right heartily. "Which is the young merchant?" said he.

The youth advanced with a graceful bow, like one who had been accustomed to good society. "And you," said the Sheik, "you are fond of music and dancing in all their perfection."

To which the youth replied, "I see, my lord, that our old acquaintance here has been amusing you with an account of our respective follies. If it has succeeded in bringing a smile to

your lip, I cannot regret the share I have borne in the ridicule. As to music and dancing, nothing to me can be so delightful. Think not, my lord, that I blame those who do not—"

"Enough," said the Sheik, waving his hand, with a smile. "You mean to say, 'Every one after his own way of thinking.' But there is one more, he who has so great a desire of travelling. Who are you, young sir?"

"My lord, I am a landscape painter, either in fresco or on canvas. I have the most ardent wish to see foreign countries, where after enjoying the sight of their beauties for a time, I may transfer them to canvas, and bring them away, under the conviction that a scene from nature is always more beautiful than the finest of mere inventions."

A shade passed over the Sheik's countenance, whilst he attentively regarded the young man.

"I too had once a dear son," said he, "who must, if he lives, be now about the same age as yourselves. Had he been spared to me, you would have formed his companions, and your every wish should have been gratified. With one he would have read, with another have frequented society, where music was to be heard, with a third have entertained friends and kept good cheer, and with the painter have wandered through all the beauties of his native land. But Allah has otherwise willed it, and without a murmur I bend to that will. Still the power remains to me to fulfil your wishes, and you shall depart from Ali Banu's house with joyful hearts. You, my learned friend," said he, turning to the scribe, "shall henceforth occupy the situation of my librarian. Add to the number of my books when you will, and the only task I shall impose upon you will be to repeat to me anything beautiful you may chance to meet with in them. You who know what constitutes a good table shall be the purveyor of my entertainments. I live alone and unjoyously, but it is expected that in the office I hold I should invite a great many persons to my table. You will represent me on these occasions, and invite your own friends whenever it pleases you, and I promise you something better than water melons to regale them on. The young merchant I must not take from his lucrative and honourable employment, but every evening, my young friend, you will find my dancers and singers at your service; and you, Mr. painter, shall have the means of visiting foreign lands, and perfecting your eye by practice. My treasurer shall give you a thousand pieces of gold to begin your journey with; also two horses and a slave, with which you

may start to-morrow. Go where you will, and whatever beauties of landscape you may see, paint them for me."

The young men knew not how to believe such joyful tidings, and their gratitude rendered them speechless; they would have kissed the ground before their benefactor's feet, had he allowed it. "Give your thanks," said he, "to this wise man, who pointed you out to me, and believe me that I am amply repaid by the pleasure of knowing four such cheerful young men as yourselves."

The dervish Mustapha declined all thanks. "You see," said he, "how dangerous it is to judge hastily. Have I said too much of this excellent man?"

"Let us have one more story from our newly-freed slaves," interrupted the Sheik, and the young men retired to their former stations.

The handsome slave, to whom all eyes had been long attracted, now rose, and, bowing to the Sheik, began in a sweet-toned voice the following relation:—

The Story of Almansor.

SIR, the persons who have had the honour of speaking before you to-day were enabled to relate many wonderful circumstances, which their foreign travel has supplied them with, while I with shame confess that I know not a single tale worthy of your notice. Nevertheless, if it would not weary you, I would relate some singular adventures which befel a friend of mine.

In the Algerine privateer, from which your compassion released me, was a young man about my own age, who had no appearance of being born to the slave's dress which he wore. As my greatest discomfort arose from the necessity of associating with rough ill-mannered persons, with whom I had no ideas in common, or those whose language I did not understand, I endeavoured to pass as much time as I could with this young man, whose name was Almansor. He was by speech an Egyptian. One day, while conversing very happily together, we agreed to relate our mutual adventures; those of my friend, however, far surpassed my own in interest.

The father of Almansor was a man of some consequence in a large Egyptian town, the name of which he did not tell me. The days of his childhood were passed with loving friends, and amid the most brilliant prosperity. His education, however, was not neglected; his mind was advanced for his age, and his father, who was a very superior person, had instructed him in the ways of virtue, and had engaged as a tutor an extremely learned man, by whom he was fully instructed in all that was necessary for a youth to know. When Almansor was about ten years of age, a war broke out between his country and the Franks, who came over the sea to prosecute their hostile intentions. The boy's father did not appear to have much favoured these people,

for one day, while he was preparing to attend the morning prayer at the Mosque, they entered his house, and after first interrogating his wife as to her sentiments towards their nation, which she declined to give, they carried off her son to their camp.

[During this recital the Sheik sat with his face buried in his hands, and a murmur of displeasure ran through the hall. The friends of the Sheik with one accord exclaimed against the folly of the young man, who, instead of administering comfort to his wounded mind, had but renewed his sorrow. The overseer of the slaves sharply reprimanded the youth, who appeared to be profoundly astonished at the effect his story had produced, and demanded what there could be in his narrative that could have so much affected the Sheik. At these words Ali Banu turned him round, and entreated his friends to abstain from all severity towards the young man, "For how can he," said he, "in the three days which he has passed under this roof, have become acquainted with my melancholy history? Think you that among all the horrors committed by these Franks no other father can have suffered as I have, and may not this very Almansor — but go on with your story, my young friend." The young slave bowed, and continued]—

In this manner was the young Almansor conveyed to the hostile camp, where, however, he experienced the kindest treatment; for one of the leaders, delighted with the boy's conversation, which he understood by means of an interpreter, allowed him to share his tent, and took an apparently deep interest in his well-doing; notwithstanding all which, however, the child continued to languish for his parents. For many days he wept unceasingly; but his sorrow produced no effect on the persons by whom he was surrounded. On the breaking up of the camp, Almansor dared to hope that he might be restored to his home; but no, the army changed its quarters, and carried on hostilities against the Mamelukes.

Almansor accompanied them, after vainly imploring the generals to send him to his parents; they told him that they held him as a hostage for his father's faith. Thus did many days of march pass away. One day, however, a movement in the army took place which did not escape the boy's observation. There was a talk about packing up, returning, embarking; and Almansor's joy was at its full, for surely now they would set him at liberty. Horses and waggons were ordered to the sea coast, and they speedily arrived in sight of the ships at anchor.

The embarkation of the soldiers commenced, but night came on before a quarter of the boats had left the shore. Almansor counted each hour as it passed, in expectation of being returned to his family, until wearied out with watching, he sank into a deep slumber, so deep as to warrant the idea that something had been mixed with the water which he drank, for the purpose of stupifying him. On awaking, he found himself in a small room, which appeared perfectly strange to him. He sprang from the couch on which he had been laid, but fell on touching the ground, which rocked to and fro, while every thing in the little chamber appeared to dance around him. Reaching out his hands, he clung to the wainscoting, and endeavoured to make his way out of the room.

An extraordinary roaring and hissing sounded in his ears, and he knew not whether he was awake or in a dream, never having either seen or heard any thing like it before. At last he reached a narrow flight of steps, and, having with some difficulty mounted to the top, experienced the deepest anguish at the sight that met his eyes. All was sky and sea, and he discovered himself to be on board ship. Amidst his weeping and lamentation he insisted on being taken back, and even endeavoured to throw himself into the sea that he might swim home; but the Franks held him fast, and endeavoured to pacify him with a promise of restoring him to his parents on condition of his obedience.

These foreigners had, however, no intention of keeping their word, for the ship was yet many days at sea, and at last approached not the coast of Egypt, but Europe. Before they could effect a landing, however, the vessel, in which Almansor was, was attacked by a ship belonging to another nation, and he was made prisoner a second time. His new masters treated him kindly, and on hearing his story, promised in due time to liberate him. At last they arrived at a seaport town, and disembarked. Their journey was continued then for many days through the interior of the country, and wherever they went, a crowd collected to look at Almansor, as they had spread a report that he was the son of the king of Egypt, who had sent him to Europe to be educated.

After travelling several days more, they arrived at a large town, which formed the termination of their journey, where Almansor was placed in the house of a physician, to be instructed in the manners and customs of the country.

An immediate change of dress was deemed necessary for

the young Mussulman, who found the European fashion extremely confined and uncomfortable, and much less handsome than his Egyptian garb. No longer did he dare to cross his arms over his breast in the eastern form of salutation. On the contrary, his respect to any person was to be shown by pulling off the hideous felt hat which he wore, in common with every one else, with one hand, while he waved the other, accompanying this motion with a scrape of his right foot. No longer did he dare to sit cross legged, as he was wont to do in his native land. A high-backed chair was the only seat allowed him, while his legs vainly endeavoured to reach the ground. The very method of eating had something strange in it to him, as he had been totally unused to an iron fork.

He was forbidden to use the eastern expression of "Salem aleikum" under pain of a beating; he hardly dared to think, much less to speak or write, in his own tongue; and although he continued to dream in his own beloved accents, he would perhaps have entirely forgotten the language had it not been for an inhabitant of the town, with whom he contracted an intimate friendship. This person was an old and very learned professor, who professed a slight knowledge of many of the eastern languages, such as Arabic, Persian, Coptic, and even Chinese. Of course he was regarded as a prodigy by his townsfolk, and he received a very ample remuneration for the lessons he gave. He invited the young Almansor to visit him one day in every week, and treated him with the greatest kindness, setting before him the choicest fruits, &c. &c.; so that the youth felt himself at home.

This old man indulged in the most extraordinary fancies. He ordered for Almansor a suit of such clothes as persons of the highest rank wear in Egypt: these he placed in a spare room of his house until the day of Almansor's arrival, when he had him arrayed in them, and conducted into an apartment of the house which it pleased the old professor to name his little Arabia. This room was filled with palms, bamboos, and young cedars, and was decked with the most beautiful flowers of the east. Persian carpets were spread over the floors, and around the walls were cushioned seats; but no table or chair or article of European furniture was to be seen. On one of these cushions sat the venerable man, with as changed an appearance from that which he ordinarily wore as was possible to conceive. A fine Turkish shawl was wound round his head in form of a turban. A flowing grey beard descended to

his waist, which looked perfectly in character with so profound a sage. His dress was a talar, made out of a brocaded dressing gown, wide Turkish trowsers, yellow slippers; and peaceful as he was at all other times, he on these days girded on a Turkish scimitar, and stuck a poignard in his belt, inlaid with imitations of precious stones. He, moreover, smoked a pipe of two ells in length, and was attended by servants also dressed in the eastern fashion, the half of whom had their faces and hands coloured black.

Almansor could not help feeling at first much surprised at this exhibition, but he soon found that the hours he passed in the society of this old man were the happiest of his life. He was not obliged here to speak the language of the Europeans, or to accost his friend in any other manner than that of his native land; to which the old Persian would answer with great complacency, and then sign to the boy to seat himself by his side; when they began to speak alternately in the Persian, Arabic, and Coptic languages, calling this a truly learned eastern conversation. Near the professor stood a servant, or, as his master on such days called him, a slave, with a large book in his hand. This proved, however, to be no other than a dictionary, which was resorted to whenever the old man by a sign declared himself at a loss for a word. Sherbet and such-like refreshments were then brought in Turkish vessels, and Almansor, to his old friend's great delight, could not but say that everything was arranged in strict conformity with the customs of the east. The professor possessed a great many Persian manuscripts, and, as Almansor read very fluently in that language, it was of great use to the old man to read them over with the boy, and thus correct his own pronunciation.

These were indeed days of happiness to poor Almansor, and seldom did he leave his kind friend's house without a present of some kind or other: at one time, of money; at another, of linen or such-like useful stuff, with which he was not provided by the doctor. Some years thus passed away, but his desire to see his home again was unabated. At the age of fifteen he met with an adventure which had a great influence on his future fate.

One day as he was crossing a bridge over a broad river that runs through the town, he saw leaning on the balustrade, a man clad in the dress of a simple citizen. This person turned round and looked at Almansor, and seemed to take an interest in the appearance of the young Egyptian. He accosted him, and on

discovering his birth and country, he desired Almansor to relate to him his story. Almansor pleased to have met with a new friend at once complied, and related his whole history, ending at last with a flood of bitter tears, and inquiring of the stranger if it were in his power to assist him in getting back to his own dear country.

The person to whom he spoke smiled, and asked him in what manner he thought he could assist him.

"I feel," said Almansor, "that I have no right to demand anything of you who are an entire stranger to me, especially as you seem to be poor like myself, but perhaps you are acquainted with some of the people about the sultan of this country, some janissary, reis effendi, or capitan bashaw; could you not put in a good word for me, through them? Get them to ask the sultan to set me at liberty, and to give me some money to take me home; and, above all things, keep it secret from the doctor and the Arabian professor."

"Who is the Arabian professor?" asked the stranger.

"Oh, he is a most wonderful man, about whom I will talk to you another time. If those two were to hear of it, I should never get away. But will you speak for me?"

"Come with me," replied his friend, "we will see what I can do for you."

"Now?" cried the boy in alarm. "Now! not for the world! the doctor would beat me. I must make haste home."

"What have you in that basket?" asked the other, detaining him.

Almansor coloured, and seemed averse to shewing the contents of his basket; but at length he said—"Sir, I am here a lower servant than the lowest of my father's slaves; my avaricious master sends me every day a league, for the sake of saving a few pence in the purchase of fish and vegetables, as the dirty market over the bridge is cheaper than that in our part of the town. Only look at these nasty herrings, this handful of salad, and this bit of butter, for which I have every day to walk two leagues. Alas! if my father did but know it!"

The person to whom Almansor spoke was much affected by the youth's condition, and begged him to take courage and go with him. "The doctor," said he, "shall do you no harm, even if he be obliged for one day to forego his herrings and his salad. Be of good heart." So taking Almansor by the hand, he led him away. The thought of the doctor made the boy's heart beat loud; but he felt so much confidence in the words and

manner of his friend, that he decided to follow wherever he might lead him. They arrived at last at a noble palace into which the stranger entered.

"Do you live here, sir?" asked Almansor.

"This is my house," answered his friend, "and I will now present you to my wife."

"Well, you have a very fine dwelling; I suppose the sultan provides your lodging for you," continued the boy.

"Yes; I live at the king's expense," answered his companion, as they entered the palace.

After mounting a broad and handsome staircase, they entered a spacious hall, where Almansor was desired to deposit his basket. His companion then led him into a magnificent apartment, where sat a lady on a couch. The gentleman spoke to her in a strange language on some subject which caused them both a great deal of amusement. The lady then asked Almansor, a great many questions concerning Egypt; after which the gentleman told him that he thought it would be better for them to go at once to the king, and endeavour to interest him in his favour.

Almansor was dreadfully alarmed at the proposition; but he thought of his present misery, and of the dear home from which he was banished, and said, "God gives courage to the unhappy, and he will not desert a poor boy like me. I will go with you to the sultan; but tell me, am I to go on my knees to him? Am I to bow my forehead to the earth? What must I do?"

Both his friends now laughed again, and assured him that this was not necessary.

"Is he very terrible and awful to look at?" asked the boy; "and has he a long beard? and flashing eyes? tell me, what sort of looking person is he?"

His guide laughed anew, and answered, "I will not describe him to you, Almansor; you shall yourself guess what sort of person he is; but I will give you a token by which to know him. Every one takes off his hat in the presence of the king, or sultan as you call him: you may therefore be sure that he who retains his hat on his head is he himself."

Thus saying, he took him by the hand, and led him into the hall of audience. The nearer he approached to the council chamber, the louder beat his heart; and by the time he reached the door, his knees knocked together with alarm. On its being opened by a servant, he beheld a half circle of about thirty persons all richly dressed, and covered with gold and stars,

as is the custom in that country with the agas and bashaws of the king; and Almansor could not help thinking what a very mean appearance his companion would make amongst so much parade. Every hat was taken off, and as Almansor looked around for him who had the right of retaining it, his eyes rested on his companion, whose hat, wonderful to relate, remained unmoved. The boy's astonishment was excessive. After a moment, however, of perplexity, he lifted his own hat, exclaiming, as he did so—

"Salem aleikum, are *you* sultan?"

"You have rightly guessed," answered the king (for he it was); "and, besides that, I am your friend. Say no longer that you are unhappy, but only that a complication of unfortunate circumstances have conspired against you. God hath not forsaken you; and his Providence has so ordered it that you should have this day met each other. Be assured that you shall return to your country by the first vessel that sails. Go now to my wife, and entertain her with an account of your Arabian professor. I will have the herrings and the salad sent to the doctor; for you will remain, until your departure from this country, in my palace."

On his ceasing to speak, Almansor threw himself at his feet, and, kissing his hand, begged his pardon for not knowing that he was the king, owing to his not having seen anything about him to make him think so.

"You are right," said the king; "when a ruler chooses to be disguised, it is not always easy to read his dignity on his forehead."

He then waved his hand, and the boy withdrew.

From that day Almansor lived happily in the palace. He contrived, at times, to visit the Arabian professor, but he never saw the doctor again. In the course of a few weeks, the king sent him word that a vessel was in the roads, on the point of sailing along with some others for Egypt. Almansor was beside himself with joy; a few days sufficed for his outfit, and, with a heart full of gratitude, and laden with presents and treasures, he took his leave, and embarked.

But it was the will of Allah that he should undergo new trials, and that his fortitude should be still longer proved by distress. He was, therefore, not yet permitted to reach the shores of his native land. The sea is as much infested by robbers as the desert, where so many caravans are plundered, and the owners ill-treated. A privateer from Tunis overtook

and captured the vessel, which had been separated from its companions by a storm, and the crew were taken to Algiers and sold.

Almansor was now deprived of all hopes of ever returning to his father and his home. He remained for five years in the service of a rich man, who imposed no severer task upon him however than that of watering his plants, and assisting to cultivate the garden. His master dying without leaving any near relation, his property was divided, and his slaves were dispersed. Almansor fell into the hands of a slave-dealer, who at this time was fitting out a ship to convey his slaves to a better market.

By chance I also belonged to this man, and was shipped on board the same vessel as Almansor. We there became acquainted, and there he detailed to me the wonderful events of his life. But when we landed, who could doubt that an especial Providence was working in his favour? For it was in his own country that we stood, and in the market-place of his native town we were openly offered for sale, and, oh my lord! to make up the sum of his happiness, his own beloved father was his purchaser!

The relation of the foregoing story had produced a deep effect on the mind of the Sheik, and his feelings had, unknown to the relator, been very much moved: his breast heaved, his eyes burned, and he had felt often tempted to interrupt the young slave. The ending of the story seemed by no means to satisfy him.

"He is about one-and-twenty, say you?" asked he.

"My lord, he is of my age; I am two-and-twenty."

"And you have not yet told us in what town he was born."

"If I do not mistake," answered the young man, "it was in Alexandria."

"Alexandria!" cried the Sheik. "Gracious Allah! surely it is my son! where is he? Did you not say his name was Kairam? Had he dark eyes and brown hair?"

"Yes; when he was particularly sorrowful, he called himself Kairam, and not Almansor."

"But, tell me, did his father purchase him in your presence? Did he say it was his father? Alas! he is not then my son."

The young man's feelings would no longer be restrained; tears of joy bathed his cheeks; while, throwing himself towards

some of those graces which shone so conspicuously in his wife. Many women would, in her place, have feared and shunned this harsh man; but such was not the case with the lovely lady of Zollern: she dearly loved her husband, and sought, with her soft, white hand, to smoothe the gloomy wrinkles from his brow; nor did she ever leave him, though he rarely addressed her, to seek other companionship, not even to tend her own little son, whom the Count would not permit to be brought into his presence more than once a-week. The nurse was desired to bring the child to him as he sat at table: he took it for a moment in his arms, and pressed his lips once coldly on its infant brow, and then, scarcely deigning to look at it, he returned it to its nurse's arms.

On the little one's third birth-day, however, the Count commanded him to be richly attired, and having desired his own gigantic coal-black horse, and another of slighter, though not less beautiful, proportions, to be brought to the castle gateway, he took his little son in his arms, and descended the great staircase. The Lady Hedwig gazed in wonder at him: she was not accustomed to interfere with her husband's movements, but on this occasion her lips were no longer sealed, and anxiety for her child prompted the question—

"Whither are you bound, my Lord?"

No answer was returned.

"Where are you taking the little one?" she inquired, timidly, "Cuno was about to walk out with me."

"Weiss schon," answered the Storm-Cloud of Zollern, and increased his pace.

On reaching the gateway, he placed the child on the smaller horse, tied him fast into the saddle, and mounting the black charger, he rode away from the castle, leading the animal which bore his little son. At first the child greatly enjoyed his ride; he laughed, clapped his tiny hands, and pulled the horse's mane in order to quicken its pace. The Count smiled grimly, and said to himself—"We will make a man of you yet." But when they reached the plain, the Count put spurs to his horse, and rode away as on the wings of the wind. The poor child, bewildered and frightened, implored his father to relax his speed; but the Count, on the contrary, renewed his efforts, until poor Cuno was blinded and breathless. His poor little heart beat with terror, and the tears rolled quickly down his cheeks. "If the child is thus frightened at his first ride, what will become of him?" cried the disappointed father.

"Peace! or——" He was about to utter some fearful curse against the little innocent, when his horse reared, and the bridle of the other slipped from his grasp, as he made a vigorous effort to master his own horse. When he had done so, and looked anxiously around for his child, it was nowhere to be seen; the horse stood near him without its little rider. Cold and cruel as the Count's nature was, he did not contemplate unmoved the almost certain death of his only child, and he retraced his steps, seeking anxiously to discover some trace of the lost one. At length, at a sudden turn in the road, he was struck by observing a solitary cottage built under the shelter of a few trees. Judging by its appearance, it was quite tenantless, and it was therefore with surprise he heard a low murmuring sound; he advanced to the window, and leaning over the sill to gaze into the room, a childish voice called to him, and he beheld his little lost one cradled in the arms of an old woman.

"Where did you find my son, old witch?" cried the Count in great wrath. "Bring him immediately to me; I cannot dismount, for my horse is unmanageable."

"Softly—softly, sir," said the old woman: "you may thank me for your son's life. I chanced to pass at the moment your horse reared: the band which fastened the child into the saddle was loosened by the start, and he would have been dashed to the ground had I not caught him in my arms."

"Weiss schon," exclaimed the Storm-Cloud; "bring him to me."

"Give me first a hirschgulden," answered the old woman.

"A hirschgulden for you!" returned the Count; "you are not worth so much; give me my child immediately, or I will set the dogs at you;" and with this he threw some coppers through the window.

"And I am not worth a hirschgulden!" repeated the old woman, "we shall see. You may keep your pennies, Sir Count, and remember my words, the whole of that boy's inheritance shall one day be worth no more than a hirschgulden." As she spoke she threw the penny-pieces back to the Count, and with so true an aim that they all fell into the leathern purse which he still held in his hand.

Zollern could not at first speak, for astonishment; but he soon recovered himself sufficiently to give utterance to his usual imprecations: he then seized his rifle, cocked it, and pointed it in at the window. The old woman continued quietly to soothe the

child—"Be a good gentle boy," she whispered to him, "and God will supply thy cruel father's place to thee." She then rose, lifted him into the Count's arms, and pointing her shrivelled finger at them. "Zollern! Zollern!" she exclaimed, as she hastened away, "the Hirschgulden is still due to me."

This was the first and last time the Storm-Cloud of Zollern ever rode forth with his little son; he made up his mind that he was a weak, timid child, looked on him with disgust, and repelled with the utmost severity all his little attempts to win his father's affections. The Lady Hedwig had borne uncomplainingly the Count's harshness towards herself, but his treatment of the child wounded her very soul. She sickened with terror whenever the boy approached his father, and often when Cuno, after some heavy and unmerited punishment, had sobbed himself to sleep in her arms, did she pray that they might soon be buried in one grave; and soon, indeed, was the grave the resting-place of her worn-out frame, and the paradise of God the refuge of her broken heart. She died whilst still in early youth, and left her little Cuno lonely upon earth.

The Baron's affections were now more than ever estranged from his child: he was seldom at home, and left him entirely to the care of his nurse and Father Joseph the chaplain.

Soon after the Lady Hedwig's death, the Count married a beautiful and wealthy lady. But Cuno was not the less neglected on this account; his stepmother conceived an aversion for him before she saw him, and this, after the birth of her own children, increased to positive hatred. As Cuno's brothers grew up, his life became more and more miserable: they had the good fortune not to fall from their horses the first time they rode forth with the Storm-Cloud of Zollern, and were, in consequence, considered by him as promising to be fine brave men, worth the trouble of bringing up; he loved them with all the affection of which his rough nature was capable, kept them constantly in his society, and taught them to ride and shoot, with all other manly exercises. They could, however, neither read nor write; they feared neither God nor man, and, before they were ten years old, were conversant with all their father's oaths; they were insensible to all affection, even for each other; and no brotherly bond united them, except when they conspired to torment Cuno.

Cuno's education had been, meanwhile, conducted on a very different principle. Trained in the school of adversity, his mind was far in advance of his years. Shunned and disliked

by those around him, he had early learned to look to Heaven for protection and companionship. Injured and oppressed himself, his sympathy was excited towards those similarly situated, and, to the best of his ability, he was a "ministering angel" to all the poor and afflicted in the neighbourhood of his father's castle. He naturally became silent and reserved, but his disposition was far from moody or sullen. A single word of kindness served to dissolve the icy band his repressed affections had laid upon his heart, and to light up his eyes with an almost heavenly expression. Nothing could be more desolate than his situation. He rose in the morning, and went forth whither he would; and no one troubled himself as to why or where he went, or when he would return. He said his prayer, and lay down at night without a single voice bidding him good-night, and it was then more than ever that the memory of his mother recurred to the orphan's thoughts. His only friends were the chaplain, Father Joseph, and the old woman who had once saved his life. He went daily to her little cottage, and there, as he sat on a low stool by her side, she would tell him of his mother, of her beauty, her piety, her kindness to the poor, her tender care of her child, her obedience to his stern father. The Frau Feldheimerin, as the old woman was called, also taught the little boy many useful things; she could prepare salves and simple medicines from flowers and herbs, and she was well acquainted with all the legends which abound in every part of Germany. To these, Cuno would listen for hours, as he sat on his little stool, weaving baskets, or contriving fishing lines under her direction; nor did he trouble himself that the Frau Feldheimerin was looked upon as a witch, and that fearful stories were told of her power over the elements, and of her nightly visits to the Brocken, the far-famed rendezvous of all the witches in the land, to which it is affirmed they repair on broom-sticks! Nor did Cuno's education end here; Father Joseph, besides instructing him in his religious duties, taught him also the then rare arts of reading and writing, with as much as he himself knew concerning the history of past ages.

Cuno's superior acquirements only tended to increase the dislike that his parents and step-brothers evinced for him. They despised him for his meek and quiet spirit, and the Count and his lady rejoiced in the pride and haughtiness of their younger sons. They encouraged them in their quarrels, though the Count feared that in their excitement the one might deal the other a deadly blow; for his mind dwelt much on the Frau

Feldheimerin's prediction. He was anxious to avert it by every means in his power. From the eminence on which Hohen Zollern was erected could be seen two other lofty hills, and he determined to build on each of them, and thus leave a castle to each of his three sons. He hastened to execute his idea, and named one of the fortresses after his favourite son Schalksberg; Little Schalk, or "rogue," being the nickname of the smaller of the twin brothers. The other castle he was much inclined to call Hirschguldenberg, in contempt of the old witch, who had estimated his whole inheritance at that price; but he contented himself with naming it Hirschberg, and to this day the ruins of Schalksberg and Hirschberg may be seen by the Alpine traveller. It was the intention of the Count to leave Zollern to his eldest son Cuno, Schalksberg to his little Schalk, and Hirschberg to Wolf, his namesake; but this arrangement did not at all suit the grasping hand of his ambitious wife, and she had no rest until the noble Castle of Zollern, which was Cuno's by right of primogeniture, was willed away to Wolf, and the newly-erected Hirschberg assigned as the inheritance of the orphan.

Soon after the signing of the will, the Count was attacked by a fatal disease. The Storm-Cloud of Zollern died as he had lived. To the physician, who informed him of his approaching end, he answered, "Weiss schon;" and to the chaplain who urged him to prepare for it, he muttered, "Dummes zeug." Before the corpse was laid in the grave, the Countess brought the will to Cuno, desiring him, scornfully, to make use of his learning to read it, and informing him that as Hirschberg was his allotted inheritance, Zollern no longer afforded him a home, and that the sooner he quitted it the better. No word of complaint or reproach escaped from the lips of Cuno, though how bitterly he felt the parting from his childhood's home needs not to be told. Every room in the castle was fraught with some sweet though sad remembrance of his sainted mother. The evening before the day fixed for his departure, he entered for the last time the apartment which had been hers. It was in an unfrequented part of the building, and it was, therefore, much in the state in which she had left it. There, in the deep recess, stood her chair, and beside it her little table, on which she was accustomed to place her work or her missal. The view from the window was familiar to him; the very air seemed redolent of his happier childish days; and, losing the command over his feelings, which long years of practice had perfected, he fell

on his knees before his mother's accustomed seat, and, burying his face in his hands, he wept aloud. And for a moment the youth lost himself in the child. He was his tender mother's little Cuno again. He imagined himself kneeling, as had been his wont, at her feet; her gentle fingers seemed twined in his clustering curls; he could feel her breath as she bent over him, and her lips touched his burning forehead; from his inmost soul there arose the cry of "Mother! mother!" and he was answered only by the harsh echoes of the deserted halls. Then he arose to a sense of his desolateness; but, at the same moment, a sweet peace stole into his heart, the vesper bells chimed forth from the convent in the valley, their notes softened by the distance seemed like the chaunt of angels, and he fancied he could recognise the silvery tones of his mother's voice, and the words seemed to him as the Almighty's charge to Joshua—"Be strong, and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed; for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest!" And the orphan was comforted. He dried his tearful eyes, and stilled his throbbing breast; and no human eye could discover on his countenance an indication of the struggle with which he tore himself from Zollern, and betook himself to his new home at Hirschberg.

As the Countess and her twin sons, who were now on the verge of manhood, sat one evening on the castle terrace, they perceived a train of horsemen winding their way down the opposite hill of Hirschberg; when they reached the valley, and commenced the ascent of Hohen Zollern, the twins recognised in the foremost rider their brother of Hirschberg.

"Is it, indeed, Cuno?" cried the Countess. "What can induce him to honour us with a visit? Perchance he finds his castle too large and lonely for him, and is come to seek us as guests. I should not have given him credit for so much good nature and good breeding. Let us go down to the gateway to receive him. After our visit is over, he will not allow us to quit Hirschberg without a present. A horse to thee, Wolf, and caparisons to thee, little Schalk; for myself, I have long coveted the splendid jewels he inherited from his mother!"

"I wish for none of Cuno's gifts!" replied Wolf, "and I will not curry favour with him. Some day, however, I hope he may follow our father, and leave us to inherit Hirschberg; then, good mother, the jewels are yours at a fair price."

"What!" retorted the Countess, "would you have me purchase the baubles of my son? Is it thus you reward me for

procuring for you the inheritance of Zollern? Had it not been for my prayers and tears, Cuno would now be lord of his ancestor's home, and we forced to inhabit the uncultivated woods of Hirschberg. Tell me, little Schalk, shall not the jewels be mine?"

"Our brother of Hirschberg still owns them, good mother," replied the lad, laughing; "but in case of his death, I will promise to take the jewels as my share of the inheritance, and, then, mother, either you or the Jew may possess them, according, of course, to which bids highest!"

The Countess had now to conceal her indignation against her mercenary sons, and welcome with smiles and smooth words the Baron von Hirschberg, in whose pale, sad countenance, she gladly thought to trace premature old age and early decay.

Cuno alighted from his horse, and saluted the Countess and her sons, gravely, but courteously; for, though he had experienced nothing but neglect and unkindness from them, his gentle heart did not forget that they were his brothers, and that this wicked woman had, at least, loved his father.

"Indeed," said the Countess, graciously, "we are much beholden to you for your early visit. How goes it with you at Hirschberg? Very lonely, I doubt not? Well, your goodly castle will not, I venture to predict, long want a mistress, now you have commenced your visits!"

"I have not given a thought to that subject, madam," replied Cuno. "The company I require, and which I have ridden hither to request, is of a different nature."

"We shall, I am sure, be most happy to contribute in any way to your entertainment," interrupted the lady, as she cast a significant glance at her sons.

Cuno continued calmly: "I wish to remove Father Joseph, the chaplain, to Hirschberg. He is my old tutor and friend—as loath to lose me as I am unwilling to part from him; we therefore arranged it thus before I left Zollern. I am also about to settle the Frau Feldheimerin in my new possessions; she once saved my life, and now that she is old and weak, I will not desert her. I have enough rooms in Hirschberg for her to end her days there in comfort."

Wolf bit his lips for vexation, and the lady turned pale with rage; the careless little Schalk laughed out, "Where, good mother, is Wolf's horse, and where the rich caparisons for me? A goodly pair, in truth, are Father Joseph and Frau Feld-

heimerin. In the forenoon our worthy brother can study Greek and Latin with the chaplain, and by way of relaxation he can, after dinner, dabble a little in witchcraft under the Frau Feldheimerin's directions!"

"Do not treat the matter so lightly," cried the Countess; "it is a disgrace to the whole family, and will be noised about through the whole country that the Count von Zollern has attired the old witch Feldheimerin in silks and jewels, and taken her to live with him at Hirschberg. Such like fancies he inherited from his mother, who was ever inclined to demean herself; could his father know what he is about to do, his leaden coffin could not contain him."

"Just so," replied little Schalk, laughing again; "I can hear my father's 'Weiss schon—dummes zeug' distinctly."

Cuno was far from wishing to quarrel with his stepbrothers. On the contrary, he did all that in him lay to conciliate them and their fierce mother. But all his endeavours were in vain; angry and bitter words, or cold, contemptuous civility, were the results of his visits, and he was about to discontinue them, when he discovered, as he thought, a means of winning his brothers' affections.

In the valley between the three castles lay a fish-pond, which, however exactly situated in the centre of the three inheritances, was included in the possessions of the owner of Hirschberg. This pond produced the best pike and carp in the whole neighbourhood, and was, to the twin brothers, who were fond of fishing, an eye-sore from their separate abodes. They were too proud either to fish in it unknown to Cuno, or to request his leave to do so.

Cuno knew how much they wished to possess this pond, and he thought he might with its assistance gain their good-will. He sent to request them to meet him on its banks, and receiving them with every demonstration of brotherly affection, he proposed that they should divide it between them. "There is" said he, "room and fish for more than three: let us, then, share it together."

"You are very kind, brother," replied little Schalk, smiling disdainfully: "we accept your offer; but tell us what you consider an equivalent fer this gracious permission, and the weekly loss of perhaps two hundred fishes?"

"I will take nothing in return," said Cuno earnestly; "I shall consider myself well repaid in occasionally meeting you here, and exchanging a few friendly words with you; remember we are all the sons of one father."

"Indeed," answered little Schalk, "I am glad you are so sociably disposed, brother Hirschberg; but solitude and silence are necessary to anglers. I think," he continued contemptuously, "we may dispense with our fraternal meetings; and if we accept your offer, we will allot different days for our fishing. Monday and Thursday may suit you, Cuno; Tuesday and Friday for you, Wolf; and Wednesday and Saturday for myself. This appears to me the best plan. What say you, Wolf?"

"I will accept nothing," answered Wolf surlily. "I will share nothing; the pond is as much ours as yours, for it lies in the centre of all our lands. I will not, therefore, receive as a favour that which you ought to concede as our right. The only plan to which I will agree, is that of casting lots for it."

"I never cast lots in such matters," replied Cuno, his heart sore with the scorn of one brother and the churlishness of the other.

"I thought not," cried little Schalk, in his accustomed jesting tone. "Good Wolf! how could you imagine that our saint-like brother would sacrifice his fishes to the blind god of chance? But I have another plan to propose. Let us commence fishing at once, and he who by the hour of twelve has taken most fishes shall become the owner of the pond."

"I am a fool," said Cuno, "to suffer that which rightfully belongs to me to be thus disputed; but God knows my only wish is to be at peace with you, and it shall be as you have said."

They then parted for a time. The twin brothers sent servants in all directions to seek for worms and flies to serve for bait. Cuno, however, took nothing with him but the rod he was accustomed to use, and the bait which in his childish days the Frau Feldheimerin had taught him to prepare. Though he was the first at the pond, he waited until his stepbrothers arrived, and then suffered them to select the best places. Notwithstanding all these concessions on his part, his brothers regarded him with ill-dissembled hatred; and when the appointed time arrived, and they proceeded according to their own arrangement to number the fish and decide on the ownership of the pond, their pent-up wrath broke forth with the utmost violence when they discovered that Cuno was undoubtedly the successful angler. Wolf snapped his rod in twain, and flung it into the pond. "It is always the case," he cried, "with those who use lawful instruments to attain their ends. As for you, brother Von Hirschberg, no one can wonder at your success, when your long apprentice-

ship and consequent perfection in the art of witchcraft is considered.

"True, I had forgotten Frau Feldheimerin," interrupted little Schalk: "if you had sooner reminded me of Cuno's dealings with her, I had not ventured on such unequal warfare."

Cuno's gentle spirit was roused past all endurance. "I have struggled long with your injustice and unkindness," he exclaimed, "but I will do so no longer; the last bond between us is broken; go hence, unnatural brothers, and God grant, when your last hours draw on, your souls may fare as well as that of the harmless woman whom, in your unholy wrath, you accuse of dealings with the evil one."

"You are right, brother Cuno," replied little Schalk, with his usual scornful smile, "the Frau Feldheimerin is no witch. Did she not prophesy to our father, that a good part of his inheritance should sell for no more than a Hirschgulden? and the prediction was so far verified, that when he died the limits of his possessions could not be seen from the highest tower in Hohen Zollern. No, no, Frau Feldheimerin is no witch; she is nothing more than a foolish old woman, and you a pale-faced credulous fellow."

So saying, the youth turned on his heel, and hastened away; for, notwithstanding his bold words, he stood in awe of his elder brother's strong arm; he was quickly followed by Wolf, who did not, however, depart until he had bestowed on Cuno all the reproaches he could think of.

The unhappy orphan returned to his empty, cheerless home, and the unkindness of his only relatives weighed so heavily on his spirits that he became dangerously ill, and would, in all probability have died, had it not been for the unceasing and unwearied care of the good father Joseph, and the despised Frau Feldheimerin.

When his step-brothers heard of his precarious state, they held a banquet, and drank to his speedy dissolution, determining that the one who first heard the joyful news should fire a salute from the battlements of his castle, and should receive, as his reward, the best cask of wine from Cuno's cellar. Wolf dispatched a servant to wait in the neighbourhood of Hirschberg to receive the earliest intelligence, and little Schalk went so far as to attempt to bribe one of Cuno's squires to give him the first intimation of the much-desired event. This squire, however, loved his pious and gentle master more than all the gold his wicked brother could offer him, and he refused the

bribe. Cuno could not believe his brothers to be guilty of such an enormity; he was at last persuaded by the Frau to test the truth of the story by his pretended death; the squire was commissioned to inform the step-brother's spy of it; and indeed the whole affair proved to be but too well-founded. The cannons thundered first from the battlements of one castle, and were quickly succeeded by still louder demonstrations of rejoicings from the other. Wolf set off instantly for Hirschberg: he did not, however, arrive there alone; little Schalk, who had quitted his castle at the same moment his brother left Zollern, met him at the pond, and they proceeded together on their way, disputing as they went respecting the partition of the inheritance. As they crossed the drawbridge, and passed under the portcullis to enter the court of the castle, the first object that met their startled gaze was the living figure of their brother Cuno! He stood at the window, and gazed on the intruders in no friendly manner; his face, emaciated by illness, was flushed with anger; his usually gently beaming eyes darted fire, and his soft voice was raised in accents of indignant wrath.

"Even until now," he cried, have I cherished affection for you in this foolish heart, but it is steeled now and for ever! Come not within reach of my rifle, ye inhuman monsters, or you will learn to your cost that at Hirschberg also is the art of shooting known." The twin-brothers did not wait to see his threat put into execution; they set spurs to their horses, and were quickly at the foot of the hill. Cuno fired off his rifle at their retreating figures; he aimed high in the air, however, for he did not wish to harm them; and then, the transient excitement of passion over, he retired to the solitude of his chamber, to bewail afresh the desolateness of his situation.

The day following, Cuno made his will, and Frau Feldheimerin said to Father Joseph, "Had it not been for their over-eagerness to possess our poor master's wealth, his wicked brothers would have probably inherited it all; but now——." The good old woman had no clue, however, by which to discover who it was whom Cuno had constituted his heirs, instead of his natural or rather *un*natural ones. Her lord decidedly though gently, evaded all her questions on the subject, and she remained in ignorance until her death, which took place within a year. Cuno had her interred in the Castle chapel, with all the respect due to one who had stood him in the stead of a mother.

He was not, however, doomed long to bear his oppressive

lot: he died in his 28th year, and the general belief was, that his death was the result of poison, skilfully conveyed to him by little Schalk. The good Father Joseph administered to him the last rites of the church, and committed him whom he had loved, to the earth; nor did he survive him very long.

The thunder of the cannons again woke the echoes of the three hills.

"This time we *know* that he is dead," said little Schalk, significantly, as he met his twin brother by appointment at the fish-pond.

"True," replied Wolf; "and, if we should be again deceived, and his pale face should once more stare down upon us, with his rifle in his hand, I too have a rifle, and will not delay long in using it."

As they crossed the drawbridge, they encountered a train of horsemen, who came from an opposite direction. The leader of the company was a perfect stranger to the brothers: his dress was simple, his demeanour grave and formal. They imagined him to be some friend of Cuno's, who wished to honour his memory by attending his interment. They courteously saluted him, praised their departed brother, and little Schalk even succeeded in shedding a few hypocritical tears. The stranger answered not a word until they all three stood in the castle-hall; then, drawing a piece of silver from his purse, he flung it on the table, exclaiming as he did so—

"There, sirs, is the legacy bequeathed you by the deceased; the sum is quite correct—a hirschgulden, I believe."

The brothers were at a loss to understand the stranger; they exchanged glances, and finally laughed aloud.

The object of their ridicule did not, however, allow himself to be disconcerted; he drew forth a document, witnessed, signed, and sealed, which proved to be Cuno's will, and read its contents aloud. The whole of his property, with the exception of his mother's splendid jewels, he desired might be sold, in case of his death, for the miserable sum of a *hirschgulden*, which was to be paid to his heirs at law; the jewels were also to be sold, and the proceeds to be devoted to the erection of a hospital in the town of Balingen. The stranger was the representative of the citizens of Wurtemberg, who had become the purchasers of Cuno's property; and no flaw could be detected in the document, by right of which he now proceeded to take possession of everything: the castle, the woods, the town of Balingen, all was willed away from the step-brothers, even to the

fish-pond; and all they inherited of the long-coveted estate was a hirschgulden.

The next morning Wolf rode over to Schalksberg.

"How," said he to his brother, "shall we dispose of our mighty legacy? Shall we spend it in drink or at play?"

"In drink," replied little Schalk; "that is the fairer way, as we can then share it equally. We will ride into Balingen, and show the good folks there how little we take it to heart that their poor little town is lost to us."

"Agreed!" answered Wolf; "and at The Lamb, in Balingen, we can procure wine fit for an emperor's table."

They mounted their horses, and reached Balingen towards noon. They ordered red wine, and drank to the amount of a hirschgulden. They then called the landlord, and Wolf, drawing forth the silver coin, stamped with the likeness of a bounding fawn, threw it on the table.

"There," said he, "is the worth of your wine."

The man took the silver coin, and, after examining it well—

"Sirs," said he, "the hirschgulden is a good one, and I hope it may profit you; for my wine, however, you must pay me in other coin, for this very morning a commissioner from Wurtemburg has given out, in the name of the count of that city, who now owns our little town, that the circulation of every hirschgulden is prohibited."

The twin brothers turned pale with rage.

"Have you other money?" inquired Wolf.

"No," said little Schalk; "have not you?"

Promising the landlord to send him the amount in other coin, they moodily mounted their horses, and returned home. Neither spoke until they reached the fish-pond, where their roads separated. As they parted at this cross-way—

"Well," said little Schalk, "we have inherited as good as nothing; moreover the wine was villanous."

"True," answered Wolf; "and, worse than all, the Frau-Feldheimerin's prediction has at last been realized. His whole estate estimated at a hirschgulden!"

"Weiss schon," answered Schalk, jestingly.

"Dummes zeug," muttered Wolf, moodily; and the twins parted.

Finis.

X.YE